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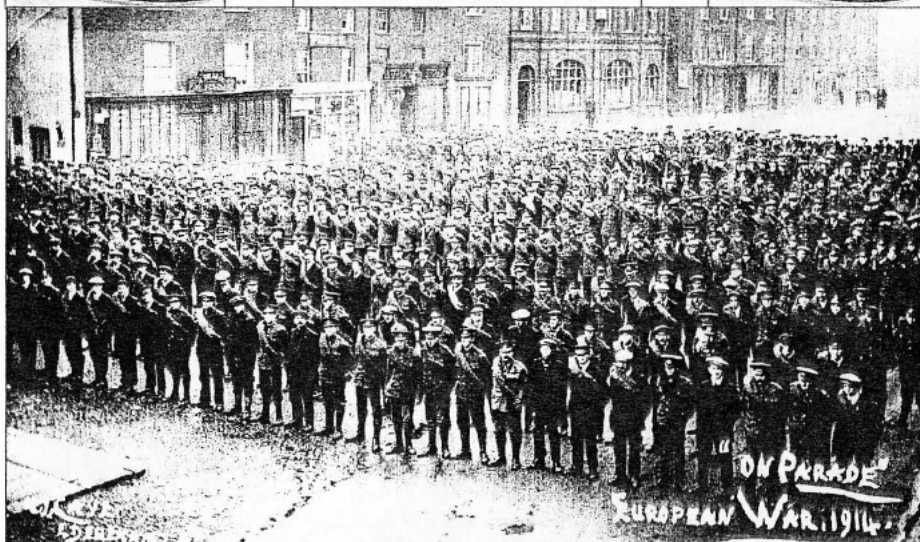
DEREHAM ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Dereham's Local History Pull Out Special

Editors - Cliff Allwright & Kitty Lynn



Picture Parade



Recruits on parade in the Market Place

Does anyone know if they had a relation standing amongst this lot ?
- if so let us know. (Wording on the picture says - on the right "on Parade, European War, 1914." and on the left 'Cave, E. Dereham')

Before going any further—I must say thank-you to Cliff Allwright for all the articles that he has been busy slaving away at for this pull-out. WELL DONE — NICE ONE CLIFF. If the article has no name then be sure it's Cliff's work. Me, I just do the layout and squeezing in.

Kitty.

Remembering “The War to end Wars”



“On Parade”, European War 1914

These are just a few of the excerpts from a diary of events in Dereham during the Great War, taken from an article we received from Shirley Davy following the death of her husband Terry. The transcription of the original document took up ten A4 pages, so this will need to be a précis of an excerpt so to speak, and content itself mainly with notes relating to important items in respect of the Armed Forces and the Red Cross Hospital, but hopefully with some other incidents of importance or interest.

On 8th August 1914, with war recently declared, a Territorial Force was formed to be known as the Reserve 5th Battalion Norfolk Regiment, and 16 members of the Reserve were called up, all old soldiers, some of whom were taken directly from the fields where they were harvesting. By the 3rd October stories of woundings and conditions in the trenches began to arrive, including a story of forty Germans having surrendered to a Dereham motor mechanic, Pte John Mitchell.

On the last day of that month it was announced that 3,000 soldiers would be stationed in the town, and police made house-to-house visits to find accommodation for them all. A lot of the women they approached were alarmed by rumours that they'd have to give up their hallowed front rooms for them.

The 5th Essex Regiment had just settled in Dereham when they received orders to leave, and within four hours they were on the train, with the 2nd East Anglian Field Ambulance, RAMC having just arrived.

Whilst the hospital was being prepared and opened (see the section on the Red Cross Hospital), the Salvation Army opened a room for the benefit of the troops, with nine more rooms for games and writing.

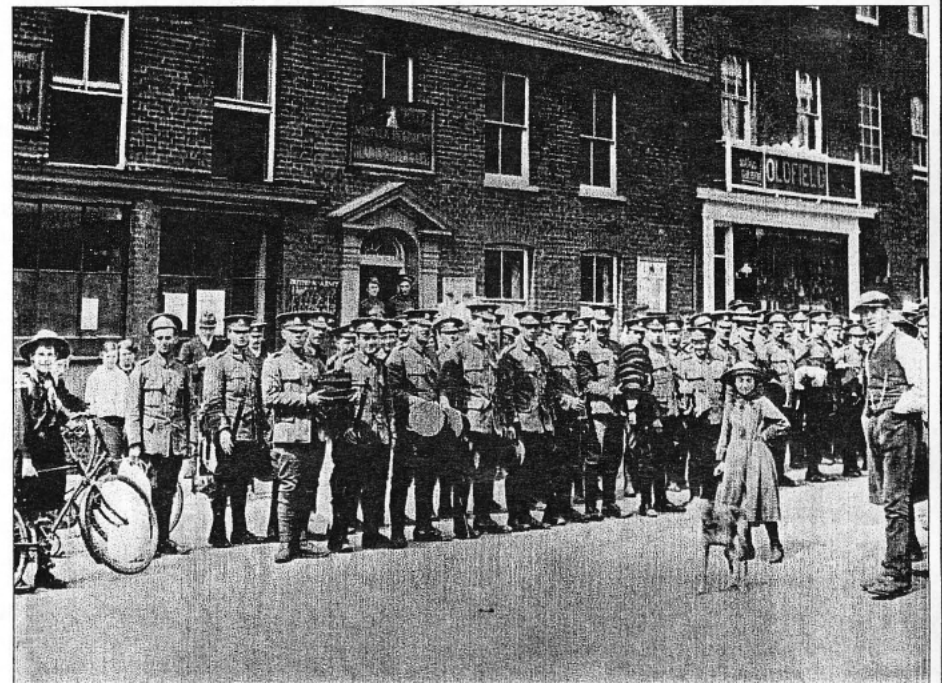
On September 11th 1915 the BBC reported that “Hostile aircraft flew over the Eastern Counties and the London district last Wednesday, and dropped incendiary and explosive bombs. At midnight a few casualties had been reported, and some fires, which were then well under control” The German version was somewhat different.

In early October Mr. Kitson, manager at the gasworks and Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, was asked that he would sound a prolonged blast on the steam “buzzer” at the gas works on hearing of Zeppelins being within fifteen miles of Dereham, and that in future one long and three short blasts would be an alarm for fire. Later he was asked to reduce gas pressure as a warning of approaching Zeppelins, and increase the pressure when the danger had passed. In February 1918 Mr. Kitson, not having received a rise in eight years, applied for a “War Bonus”, his salary at the time being £180 a year. Because of the invaluable services he had rendered, the Council gave him an extra £52 a year, pointing out that on one occasion he had worked throughout two days and one night, and had often worked nights to fill the gas retorts and that, had engineers been called in, the bill to ratepayers would have been enormous.

In May of 1916, because of the shortage of men on the farms, 6,000 soldiers in Norfolk were made available to help with the harvest. Later, in March 1918, fifty German prisoners of war were housed at Gressenhall Workhouse, who would be employed on “farm and similar work”. In May of that year farm workers’ wages stood at 30/- for a week of 54 hours, with a half-day on Saturdays.

On the 17th of April 1918 meat rationing was introduced, after which date no meat could be obtained without producing your Meat Ration Card.

In November 1918, following the conclusion of the War, the Vicar presided at a meeting of



The 5th Norfolk's Headquarters volunteers form up outside their Headquarters in Quebec Street to receive their first issue of hats.

relatives of the men who had fallen in the war to ask their views as to what form a Memorial should take, and a screen at the end of the Chancel in the Church was suggested, with the names engraved in gold, at a cost of between £500 and £600. A fortnight later there was another meeting to discuss the matter, and despite opposition it was decided to go ahead with the Memorial in the Parish Church, with a committee to decide what form this would take.

The final parade of the Dereham Company of the Norfolk Volunteer Regiment took place on Sunday 23rd. February 1919, at which all equipment had to be handed in with the exceptions of uniforms and greatcoats. The whole Company would be entertained to supper on 1st March.

Elaborate plans were made for Peace Celebrations, and a Cottage Hospital was proposed as a suitable War Memorial, with a Free Library as another suggestion, as "Dereham, above all places, needed education" A tea for children was proposed if funds permitted, as was a dinner for servicemen, and although the committee decided against a bonfire, Mr. Howlett offered to provide some fireworks.

Peace Day celebrations were held on 19th July, and the town was decorated with flags and banners of all shapes and sizes, but there were one or two showers in the morning, and heavy rain and thunder sent people scurrying for shelter in the late evening. A short service was held in the morning, at which the ministers of the various religious denominations took part, with a muffled peal of the church bells during the service as a reminder of those who had made the great sacrifice.

At 2.30 a procession formed up in the Market Place and, headed by the Town Band, marched to the Recreation Ground for sports, and at 4.30 the explosion of a maroon summoned the children to "fall in" and 1,300 proceeded to F & G Smith's maltings in Norwich Road, "where 180 loaves, 353 lbs of cake disappeared with astonishing rapidity".

Despite the rain, which lasted about an hour, the evening was spent in impromptu amusement, and the day's programme concluded with a firework display, and the total cost of Dereham's Peace Celebrations came to £184.16.3d.

This information was taken from the DAS Booklet entitled Dereham in the First World War.



The funeral cortege of Sergeant Robert Bowers makes its way along Church Street from the Parish Church to the cemetery.

One Dereham Man's Experience of War



Gerald Haynes was born in Wimbledon in 1894, moved to Wells in 1896 and to Dereham in 1908. His father had purchased a Cycle Shop at 32, High Street (later sold to Sparrow's, then Adams). He worked as an office boy at the Conservative Association Offices, which were above a bank, now William H. Brown's in the Market Place, for 5/- per week. During elections this was increased to £1 per week. In 1910, the Unionist Candidate, William Boyle of Honingham Hall was elected. Gerald Haynes worked for him at the time.

He volunteered at the age of 19, with Percy Mitchell (of the Bakery Shop near the Assembly Rooms) in September 1914, (possibly the 1/5th Volunteer Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment.) The Recruiting Officer's first question was "How old are you? If the volunteer replied "18, Sir", he was told to walk round the Market Place and return in five minutes. When he returned he was again asked his age, and the reply was usually "19, Sir".

All troops were volunteers at the beginning of the war, and had to be aged between 19 and 38. Pay in the army was 1/- per day, all found, but married men had 6d per day deducted from pay, which was sent to their wives or dependents. A skilled civilian earned £1 per week, and a farm labourer 12/- per week. Uniforms were issued, when available, and were often second-hand and dirty. Gerald Haynes' was greasy round the collar, and his mother would not allow him to wear it until it had been scrubbed and disinfected. A few regular soldiers, such as Sgt. Major Heffer (later Councillor), plus one or two others, were left behind to knock the raw recruits into shape, mainly by marching and physical training to get the men fit. They then went to Peterborough in December 1914 for basic training. Then they went to Bury St. Edmunds, marching all the way, as there was no transport available, sleeping in fields overnight.

Gerald Haynes then served in France, where he was blown out of a trench by a bomb blast. His two companions were killed, and Gerald was returned to England and sent to a hospital in Brighton. On hearing that those who were likely to be in hospital for over three months could transfer to a hospital nearer home, he managed to transfer to the Red Cross Hospital in Dereham, where he received treatment.

The doctors usually dressed wounds, and gave treatment, and after lunch patients could do what they liked. Gerald used to go home, returning to the hospital just before the 10 p.m. curfew. He remembers the Matron at the time was Mrs. Braithwaite, and her sister, Ruth Braithwaite, was head sister. After the war they went to live in Shropshire, and Gerald kept in touch for a time. Also remembered at the hospital were VAD Mary Oldham (Red Cross) and Katie Brett (married to Fred Tuck). Later, Gerald was transferred to Felixstowe for convalescence, and was demobbed on April 1st 1919 at Thetford.

The Vicar, the Rev. MacNaughton-Jones, used to visit the hospital regularly. Gerald remembers he was absent-minded, and once went to Norwich by car but came home by train – then reported his car was stolen to the police. In 1914 soldiers were stopping horses coming through the Market Place and commandeering them for the Army. They were used to pull guns and carriages on the field of battle. Philip Lines, grocer, had a high-stepping mare which came along and was taken.

ZEPPELIN RAID

Gerald Haynes' father used to go to the Post Office most evenings with Mr. Taylor from the China Shop in High Street (almost opposite), and call for a pint at the Lord Nelson on the way back. On this occasion Mr. Haynes was not ready to go, and Mr. Taylor went on ahead – and was killed by a bomb blast at the top of Church Street.

Hary and Sylvia Johnson, who lived in Baxter Row, were drinking in the White Lion and were both badly injured (she had a breast removed). They were thought to be Jack Wiseman's grandparents?

When Zeppelins came to Dereham



It was around 8.30 in the evening of September 8th 1915 when people in Dereham first became aware that there was a Zeppelin in the vicinity.

A lady in Church Street later told a reporter that she had just finished papering a wall and cleaning up, and she told her daughter "That's done, and if the Germans come it will all be for nothing". "The Germans will never come here" my daughter replied, but before she had finished speaking, bang went the bomb, and now look at the result". Her house was partly demolished.

The Zeppelin approached from the direction of Great Ryburgh, and dropped some seventy-five bombs, both explosive and incendiary, the damage being confined to a comparatively small area around Church Street, Vicarage Lane (St. Withburga Lane), and the Market Place, as a result of which three people were killed, two later died of wounds, and five were injured.

The Press report was short and not very informative, saying only 'Hostile aircraft visited the Eastern Counties and the London district, and dropped incendiary and explosive bombs' The German account was far more forthcoming, as might be expected, and convinced people that the Zeppelin was making for Norwich, and that the crew had mistaken their position.

Here in Dereham several buildings were demolished and a number of roofs knocked about, while the glass of practically every building within a hundred yards of the Corn Hall was shattered. Eight or nine bombs fell in the Vicarage grounds, which held the new Red Cross Hospital, but none of them exploded. Some incendiary bombs fell quite close to the Hospital and the convalescent soldiers smothered them with their blankets. Some of them reckoned that it was more terrifying than the shells falling at the Front. At least they could retaliate over there, but here they felt helpless.

A bomb came down by the Guildhall and brought down part of the building, and some of the stained glass windows in St. Nicholas Church were damaged, but by some stroke of fortune Bishop Bonner's Cottages, dating from 1502, were untouched. They must bear a charmed life, having survived the two major fires that had devastated Dereham many years earlier

The most serious damage was in Church Street, where the roof of the White Lion public house was destroyed, the windows blown in, and two customers who were sitting in the bar were seriously injured. The whole front of Hamerton's grocer's shop was blown out and the



This photograph shows the damage to shops in the top section of Church Street, East Dereham—September 9th 1915.

One of the worst hit places in Dereham was the White Lion Public House—it was never to open its doors again.

The Inland Revenue Office now stands on the site.



goods scattered all over the road, and the walls of properties opposite were peppered with holes. It was here that a soldier was killed, and part of his body was found on the roof of a building near the Corn Hall.

The Corn Hall itself had a lucky escape. Although bombs fell all around it, none actually struck it, but the glass roof was shattered by the concussion. An adjacent house caught the blast and was demolished, and although the tenant was absent at the time, a soldier sheltering there was buried when the house fell on him. He was brought out alive but later died of his injuries.

The same bomb killed Mr. James Taylor, who lived in the High Street and was on his way to the Post Office, and Mr. Patterson, a jeweller, was killed at the same moment while on the same errand.

An incendiary bomb fell on the premises of Uttingham & Buckingham, ironmonger, in the Market Place, and the oil store was set on fire, while a lot of cartridges were constantly exploding, making the work of the firemen extremely dangerous.

The Fire Brigade was usually summoned by firing maroons, and as soon as the fire in Uttingham & Buckingham's broke out Mr. Herbert Leech ran to the King's Arms Hotel where the maroons were kept, but found the occupants all down in the cellar. He shouted for the maroon to be fired, but no-one would take the risk as the bombs were still falling, so he asked for the key to the house where the maroon bombs were kept, and called on a passing soldier to help him. They got the bombs out, and although he knew nothing about how to fire them, he tried, actually holding the match in his hand as he lit the fuse. The blast sent the soldier rolling into the cabbage bed, and he bolted but, nothing daunted, Mr. Leech fired a second bomb and the Zeppelin fled, so his act may have attributed to its departure.

There was scarcely a building within a considerable area around the Market Place that did not suffer to some extent, and in all about 130 houses were knocked about to a greater or lesser degree.

Later, two little girls, Barbara Gower, just over three, and Margaret Kemp, nearly four, were posed one each side of an unexploded bomb to have their photograph taken. Fortunately for all concerned it didn't go off.

At the inquests of those killed in the raid the jury in each case returned a verdict that death was caused by a bomb "unlawfully dropped from a Zeppelin aircraft".

Dereham's Red Cross Hospital

War with Germany was declared on 4th August 1914. Army Reserves were called up, and by the 3rd October stories of woundings and conditions in the trenches had begun to filter in, including the problems that our troops were having in asking French people who couldn't understand English to post their letters home.

On 24th of that month there was a meeting to consider the establishment of a small hospital for wounded soldiers from Military Clearing Hospitals, with a surgeon and fully trained nurses to deal with surgical cases in compliance with War Office Regulations.

A committee was formed to run the new hospital. The Vicar Rev. W.H. Macnaughton-Jones and his wife offered to vacate the Vicarage to house it, and they subsequently moved to Nicholas House in Norwich Street.

Two days later the Vicar started a Penny Fund for maintenance of the Hospital, whereby £48.12.6d was guaranteed by weekly contributions each Saturday of 1d.

Preparations went ahead, so that in mid-November fifty ladies from two of the town's churches were able to promise that the hospital would be ready "next week", and the Vicar vacated the Vicarage in preparation.

Before the end of the year the people of Dereham had guaranteed the £6 a week necessary for the upkeep of the hospital, and in addition £70 had been raised for transforming the Vicarage into a hospital for 20 beds, while three additional beds could be added in an emergency. Twelve of these beds to be at the disposal of the local regiment and the others for troops wounded at the front.

Matron of the Hospital was Miss Latham, formerly a Sister at the Shoreditch General Hospital, assisted by Miss Leslie, who trained at King's College. Seven Dereham ladies assisted with day duties, and each one was asked to choose three ladies holding a Red Cross Society's nursing certificate to work with her. Five ladies from the town, all qualified nurses, volunteered for night duty, assisted by the Red Cross nurses, while some former members of the RAMC(T) volunteered



Patients and nurses enjoy the sun outside Dereham Red Cross Hospital formerly the Vicarage, with the 'Farmers Annexe' on the left.



Dereham Vicarage drawing room as a Military Hospital in WWI
The nurse on the right with the red cross apron on is Miss Oldham of 5, Quebec Road.

to help whenever required, and a motorcar was organised to bring patients from Norwich. Although the hospital didn't officially open until Monday 15th November, the first case was admitted on Saturday 7th November—a sergeant of the 5th Essex Regiment, who had broken his leg whilst roller skating at the rink during the morning. On Saturday 19th December more patients from the 5th Essex Regiment were admitted with the hospital already having two patients from the 5th Reserve Battalion Norfolk Regiment there.

The hospital received its first patients from the front on 5th March 1915, including nine English patients who had been severely wounded, as had the one Belgian. They arrived in motorcars driven by local gents from the hospital at Sheringham, and were attended by Dr. J.K. Howlett and Dr. V.J. Duigan.

A further sixteen patients, injured during the Battle of Hill 60, arrived by train from Colchester on March 20th 1915, and townspeople rallied round with provisions such as milk, fruit and vegetables. They also provided rugs, blankets, clothes and records, while local tradesmen provided meat etc. A daily list of urgent requirements was posted outside the King's Arms, and a regular column of acknowledgements was shown in the Dereham & Fakenham Times. In May the Hospital was extended with the erection of an annexe for ten more beds, making 33 in all, and a room belonging to Mr. Ruston of Etling Green was purchased for £50 to be used as a Reading Room. A further annexe, to be used for operations, was opened in July.

On July 9th 1915, an annexe to the Hospital known as the Farmers' Annexe, was opened, giving a further twelve beds needed to meet demands. To fund it, farmers and others in Mid-Norfolk had held a jumble sale and auction in the Market Place three weeks earlier. The Quartermaster of the Hospital, Rev. Macnaughton-Jones, together with Mr. E.E. Hill, who organised the jumble sale, performed the ceremony at which the words "Farmers' Annexe" was painted under the gable in recognition of the part they had played in raising the finance for it. By the end of July 1915 there were 39 patients in the Hospital, including 21 wounded at the

front. During the month 381 breakfasts, dinners, teas and suppers were served, and the cost for food was £36.18s. (£36.75) including the value of gifts. The cost of keeping patients was 1s.5½d a day, or 10s 4 ¼d a week.

In November a second annexe for 15 beds was erected to meet demands, bringing the total of beds to forty-eight.

By October 4th 1915 the Hospital had been open exactly one year, during which it had treated 364 cases, nearly all of whom had been returned to duty. Forty men spent Christmas in the Hospital, and received gifts from the Friends of the Hospital.

In February 1916 it was announced that, in the 14 months up to 31st. December 1915 the Red Cross Hospital had mobilised 506 cases – 142 local troops and 364 wounded. Of the local troops 7 were discharged unfit for military service, 125 returned to their units, 1 died at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital, and 9 were transferred to other hospitals for further operations.

In June it was announced that Mr. Moody had to date collected 1750 eggs from the people of Scarning for the Hospital.

The Red Cross Hospital Sports were held on June 24th. The weather was ideal and a good number of the public turned up. Special prizes were given by a number of the Friends, and the Vicar entered the Sack Race but quickly came to grief. There were sideshows and a cricket match between the wounded, who played left-handed, v the ladies. In the evening there was a concert and dancing, before which a band from the Hospital, with various instruments and dressed in grotesque costumes, had paraded through the town. The noise was an even greater attraction than the usual band, and crowds of youngsters joined in the parade.

During 1916 the Hospital had treated 461 patients, most of whom had gone back to the services. For every 1/- (5p) subscribed locally they received 9/- (45p) from the War Office. The average cost of keeping a man in the Hospital was 3s.3d (18p) a day, of which they received back 3/- (15p). The cost in a non-voluntary hospital was 6/- (30p) per man per day. The only paid staff were a Matron, a Cook, a general maid and a lad – the rest of the staff were volunteers.

What was to be considered a "farewell" to the local hospital was held in March 1919, and the Commandant, the Rev. Macnaughton-Jones and his wife, who was the Quartermaster, were there with all the general staff and voluntary workers. During its existence the Hospital had received over 2,000 patients of various nationalities, and many of the nurses had received bars for their time given, some as many as three, while Misses Cory, Herbert and Wilson had been specially mentioned in despatches for "special services to the British Empire Red Cross Society".

Over the years, Dereham and the surrounding area had subscribed £3,500 toward the cost of running the Hospital, and there was a small surplus, which it was hoped could be used toward a Cottage Hospital, which was so much needed in the town.

By the beginning of May 1919 the Hospital was closed and the effects auctioned off at which the bedsteads, mattresses furniture and miscellaneous effects fetched high prices, while the annexes were sold for £140, £100, and £65, while the building used for a surgery fetched a further £37.

In mid-June of that year a ceremony was held in the Vicarage grounds at which members of Dereham Red Cross Detachment were presented with a small souvenir in recognition of their work at the Hospital during the past five years. Forty-two members received silver inkwells inscribed "Red Cross Hospital, Dereham, 1914 to 1919"

The Vicar, as Commandant, presented a cheque for £25 to Miss Herbert, who had rendered voluntary work to the Hospital as masseuse since its inauguration, and the company inspected the portrait of Mrs. Macnaughton-Jones, BRRC, who acted as the Hospital's Quartermaster whilst her husband was at war. It was the work of Miss R. Dakin, and had been presented to the Commandant by the Detachment and the committee.

Several suggestions were put forward for a permanent Memorial, a clubroom for discharged

servicemen, a "Welcome Club" for the young people of Dereham, a Free Library, motor transport to link Dereham with neighbouring towns, and provision of a Maternity Nurse, while other ideas were for a swimming bath and pleasure grounds similar to Loch Neaton in Watton, but by July 1919 it was evident that there was overwhelming support in favour of a Cottage hospital, and Mr. G. Brett submitted a proposal for the establishment of a Cottage Hospital, the cost being estimated as £1,500, plus £50 per bed for six or eight beds. As a result, on 16th August a sub-committee was appointed to draw up a scheme for a Cottage Hospital as the town's Peace Memorial to replace the Red Cross Hospital that had served so admirably during the past years.

So that's a very brief account of some of the events that took place at Dereham's Red Cross Hospital during the war years, a programme that was probably repeated in other towns all over the country, but Dereham had an unrivalled record in having sent Christmas presents to all their serving men each year, and was the only town in the country that had been able to support their Red Cross Hospital without asking for a single penny from the British Red Cross Society.

An abridged version of the Red Cross Hospital section from the forthcoming D.A.S. booklet—Dereham Hospital.



Patients and Red Cross Nurses outside Dereham Hospital (the Vicarage) during WWI

