

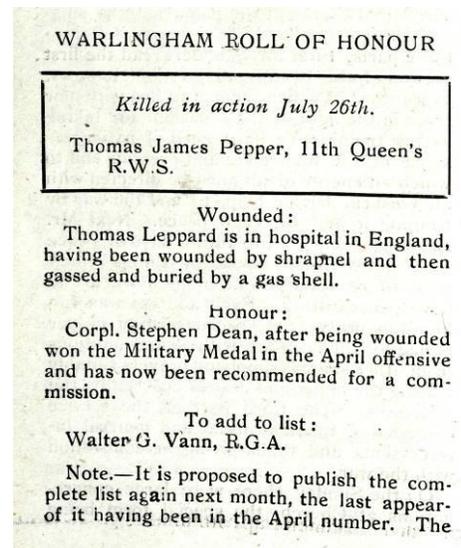
## THE HOME FRONT IN SURREY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR A GUIDE TO SOURCES AT SURREY HISTORY CENTRE

### Part 12. The Response of the Churches

Their position at the heart of communities, particularly in a time of huge uncertainty and personal and communal loss on an unprecedented scale, gave churches a leading role in mobilising public responses and maintaining morale.

Perhaps the richest source for this activity is the parish magazine. Where these have survived they can, at their best, provide a commentary on the war through the minister's monthly letter, detailed reports on the work of local organisations such as war savings committees, and information on parishioners serving overseas. Only a small number have been inspected, but it is clear that the level of detail varies considerably: the Horsell magazine (SHC ref 8591/1/1) only carries brief mentions of the activities of local organisations and occasional lists of those serving, wounded or killed etc; however the Kingswood magazine not only includes regular reports of Tadworth and District War Savings Committee and other similar local organisations but also has a regular 'Our Roll of Honour' section with news of local men and some extracts from letters home (SHC ref 7580/1). The magazine for Warlingham, Chelsham and Farleigh (SHC ref 7742/4/3) carries numerous reports of bodies such as the War Relief Committee, the Working Party, the local War Hospital, the Warlingham, Chelsham, Farleigh and Whyteleaf War Hospital Supply Depot, the War Savings Association, the Comforts Fund and references to the Enteric Convalescent Camp at Woldingham and the camp of the 17<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers at Court Farm; updated rolls of honour (giving names and unit) for all three parishes are provided each month and occasional obituaries, such as those for Richard and Lilian Roberts, killed in air raid in London, reported in Jul 1917. The Stoke D'Abernon magazine (SHC ref 8909/8/1/4) also provides a roll of honour and obituaries of those killed each month with some extracts from letters also included and requests for money and gifts to support troops and Belgian refugees. The Witley magazine (SHC ref WIT/16/36) includes regular fundraising bulletins and well as reminders about restrictions on bell ringing and lighting at night. The activities of the local Canadian troops at Witley Camp are also referenced. The Coulsdon magazine (SHC ref 7435/7/2) carries a roll of honour from May 1916, includes the text of the royal proclamation urging food economy and discusses the setting up of a war shrine towards the end of the war. The Walton on Thames magazine (SHC ref 8347/2), although generally war references are very brief, does carry photographs of the local war 'shrines' to those serving which were erected in Russell Road and Cottimore Lane, Oct 1916 and Mar 1917, and a colour image of the proposed memorial baptistery.

Some parishes also contributed to a collective roll of honour: in Nov 1914 parishes around Godalming provided information for a list of men serving in the army and navy, with an 'In Memoriam' section at the front (SHC ref Z/550/1). Profits from the sale of the booklet were to

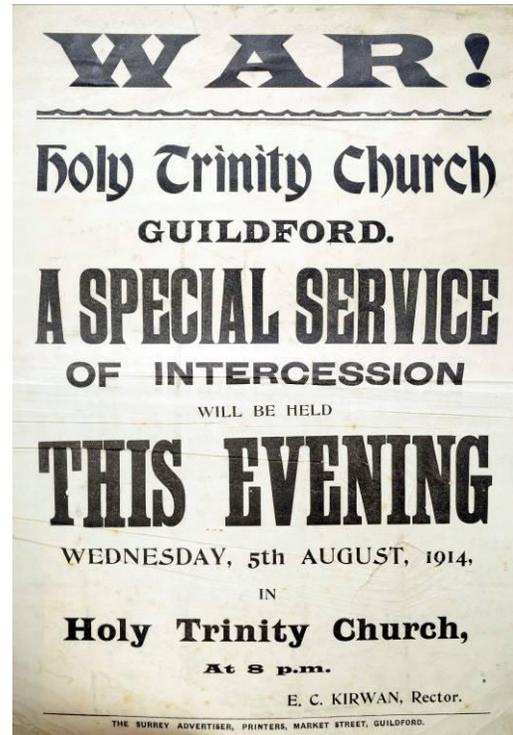


*Warlingham parish magazine,  
with its local roll of honour (SHC  
ref 7742/4/3)*

be devoted to the funds of the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association and Local Relief Committee.

Alongside magazines, vestry minute books may also prove useful and there will also be references to special wartime services in registers of services and occasional references in church account books (for example the Shere and Peaslake church accounts include a section on 'Special War Needs', with expenditure on 'Wool for Soldiers & Sailors mufflers', SHC ref 7452/1/4/8).

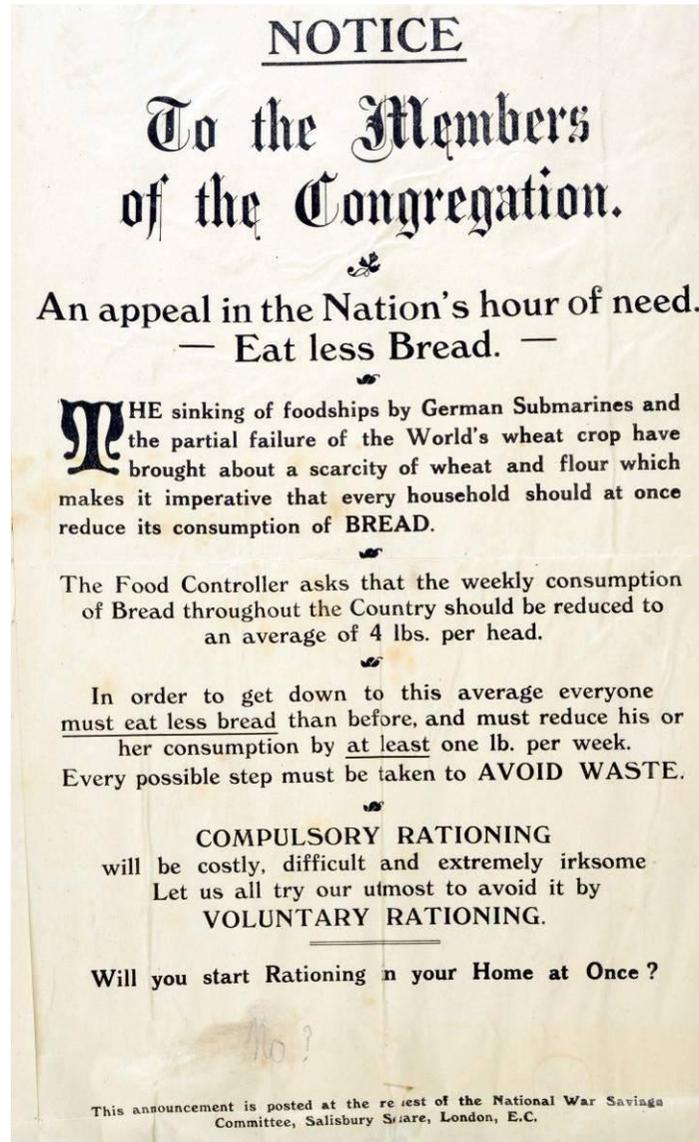
The Rector of Holy Trinity, Guildford, the Rev E C Kirwan, kept a scrapbook through the war which includes correspondence, press cuttings, notices and orders of service relating to the church and town in the war (SHC ref GUHT/57/7/1). The contents include a letter from the Town Clerk about the clocks going forward on the night of 20-21 May 1916 and a Home Office notice concerning restoration of 'normal time', 25 Sep 1916; numerous notices and circulars about collections for soldiers and sailors and the prisoner of war relief funds for the Surrey Regiments; a circular letter from the Bishop of Winchester on the outbreak of war, 5 Aug 1914, notice of special service of intercession in the church on the same day and other orders of service for days of intercession and a notice of a service of thanksgiving, 11 Nov 1918, 'in the event of the German government assenting to the terms of allies'. The Royal Proclamation of May 1917, 'to practise the greatest economy and frugality in the use of every species of grain' is also included with a notice to the congregation to eat less bread (4lb per head per week) and so avoid compulsory rationing. Finally there are leaflets issued by the National War Savings Committee and a printed copy of the letter from King George V welcoming Guildford's proposed efforts to raise money for tanks, 6 Mar 1918.



*Notice of special service of intercession at Holy Trinity Guildford, 5 Aug 1914 (SHC ref GUHT/57/7/1)*

References to the war in the records of churches of other denominations, such as Methodist, Baptist and Congregational are most likely to be found in the minutes of the governing bodies of the those churches: for example the minutes of Godalming Congregational Church Deacons' Meetings include discussion of services and entertainment for soldiers and air raid precautions; a report of damage to the church fence caused by Army mules, 1916; the curtailment of weekday activities to avoid 'young ladies being out in the present dark state of the town', Oct 1916; arrangements for soldiers to attend services and social gatherings, 1916-1918; and the sending to the Red Cross of the proceeds from the Boy Scouts' sales of paper salvage, 1917 (SHC ref 1331/2/5-6); the minutes of Deacons' and Church Meetings for Christ Church Congregational Church, Wimbledon, refer to the resignation of the pastor in 1915 on war issues (SHC refs 2151/4/1, 2151/5/1). As mentioned above in section 5, Monthly and Preparative Meeting minutes of Surrey congregations of the Religious Society of Friends may contain references to local conscientious objectors alongside other war-related business.

Another initiative to address the spiritual needs of troops was the Soldiers' Gospel Mission, Guildford, which distributed active service gospels to soldiers. For an invitation to the Countess of Onslow to support the work of the mission, 1918, see SHC ref G173/177.



*Leaflet appealing to parishioners of Holy Trinity  
Guildford to eat less bread (SHC ref GUHT/57/7/1)*