The Great War in Snatches of Songs and Transcripts from

They were summoned from the hillside,  
They were called in from the glen,  
And the country found them ready  
At the stirring call for men.  
Let no tears add to their hardship,  
As the soldiers pass along,  
And although your heart is breaking  
Make it sing this cheery song:

Keep the home fires burning  
While your hearts are yearning,  
Though the lads are far away,  
They dream of home.  
There's a silver lining,  
Through the dark clouds shining,  
Turn the dark cloud inside out,  
Till the boys come home.

“On it becoming known that the mobilisation of the Territorial Forces was expected great excitement prevailed in Stroud. Holiday makers gathered in groups round the Post Office…Until a late hour on Wednesday the streets of Stroud continued in an animated state, groups of people gathering in the busier parts of the town, eagerly discussing the latest news. The evening papers were snatched up as soon as they were on the streets.”

September 4th: “Mid-Gloucestershire, which a week ago seemed woefully apathetic, is now revealing its patriotism… Stonehouse reported 23 recruits on Friday night; Cainscross caused us a shiver of apprehension on Saturday by merely offering three men, but in justice to that parish it should be stated that in addition to the considerable number of gallant men already serving in both Army and Navy, some 40 or 50 recruits have been enrolled from the Cainscross area since the meeting; Painswick gave us 30 on Sunday; Amberley responded finely on Monday with 40 patriotic offers; and on Tuesday Minchinhampton beat all previous records with 45 recruits…Stroud has another chance on Saturday night, and although we believe considerable numbers have enlisted without the stimulant of a public meeting, one has only to look round to see that the recruiting force here is hardly tapped.”

The Army and the Navy need attention,  
The outlook isn't healthy you'll admit,  
But I've got a perfect dream of a new recruiting scheme,  
Which I think is absolutely it.  
If only other girls would do as I do  
I believe that we could manage it alone,  
For I turn all suitors from me but the sailor and the Tommy,  
I've an army and a navy of my own.

On Sunday I walk out with a Soldier,  
On Monday I'm taken by a Tar,  
On Tuesday I'm out with a baby Boy Scout,  
On Wednesday a Hussar;  
On Thursday I go out with a Stroudie,  
On Friday, the Captain of the crew;  
But on Saturday I'm willing, if you'll only take the shilling,  
To make a man of any one of you.

I teach the tenderfoot to face the powder,  
That gives an added lustre to my skin,  
And I show the raw recruit how to give a chaste salute,  
So when I'm presenting arms he's falling in.  
It makes you almost proud to be a woman.  
When you make a strapping soldier of a kid.  
And he says 'You put me through it and I didn't want to do it  
But you went and made me love you so I did.'

On Sunday I walk out with a Bo'sun.  
On Monday a Rifleman in green,  
On Tuesday I choose a 'sub' in the 'Blues',  
On Wednesday a Marine;  
On Thursday a Terrier from Toadsmoor,  
On Friday a Midshipman or two,  
But on Saturday I'm willing, if you'll only take the shilling,  
To make a man of any one of you.

On the 21st, about 20 wounded soldiers arrived at Stroud and “There was the usual uncertainty as to which railway station they would arrive at, and consequently the crowds were thickest at the top of Rowcroft, where the roads from the two stations meet. Here people lined the streets six or eight deep, and there was only a narrow way left for the passage of motor-cars and carriages, which had been kindly lent by residents to convey the wounded to hospital…’

December 11th, 1914, saw a commentary on some soldiers’ letters that had been appearing in the news. The letters could provide, it was said, “an even better conception of the exacting and severe nature of modern warfare”, but the reader should remember that soldiers were a diverse and “often temperamental. For instance, although one letter we published last week from a private of the Gloucestershire Regiment referred to excessively heavy casualties – 1,300 out of

1,600 men was the number given – another private of the same regiment wrote exuberantly ‘I am as happy as the birds in the air’…Our men now march, perhaps to death, singing the flippant marching song, ‘It’s a long, long way to Tipperary,’ instead of the ponderous national chants favoured by the Teutons.”

It's a long way to Tipperary,

It's a long way to go.

It's a long way to Tipperary

To the sweetest girl I know!

Goodbye, Piccadilly,

Farewell, Leicester Square!

It's a long long way to Tipperary,

But my heart's right there.

 “While there is supreme confidence among English people that by the time another Christmas season is with us the great war will have come to an end satisfactory to their country and allies, this supreme confidence cannot at present be magnified into a conviction of certainty…Mr. Geo. J. Holloway sent a Christmas gift to the Gloucestershire Regiment fighting at the front, consisting of 100 packs of playing cards and 10,000 cigarettes. Each packet contained 10 cigarettes and was stamped with the message ‘Good Luck.’”

Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,

And smile, smile, smile,

While you've a Lucifer to light your fag,

Smile, boys, that's the style.

What's the use of worrying?

It never was worthwhile, so

Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,

And smile, smile, smile.

February 12th: “Few winters could have been more unpropitious for open-air military training than the present one, and when one considers the extraordinary heavy rainfall since the end of last October the more one must be struck by the wonderful accomplishment of our new armies. We believe that notwithstanding the exposure to the vilest weather, day after day, week after week, the general health of our armies now training in England is better than that of the civilian population.”

February 19th: “While the increased cost of living has reduced the spending powers of wage-earners…it is a matter for profound gratification that so far there has been very little acute distress and a very low average of unemployment. This we attribute before to the excellent response to Lord Kitchener’s appeal on the part of the young men of the district, thus relieving many firms of the necessity of curtailing their staffs, but another and even greater cause is the amount of work being done at local mills and factories.”

Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers,

     Such skill at sewing shirts our shy young sister Susie shows!

     Some soldiers send epistles, say they'd rather sleep in thistles

     Than the saucy soft short shirts for soldiers sister Susie sews.

April 23rd: “The recruiting campaign organised in the Mid-Gloucestershire Division during this week by a visit of the drum and fife band and Recruiting Party of the… Gloucesters to the various towns and villages was carried out with fairly satisfactory results…The enthusiasm in Stroud was stirred to its highest …At the close of the day about 25 eligible young men were obtained for service.”

Brother Bertie went away To do his bit the other day With a smile on his lips and his Lieutenant's pips upon his shoulder bright and gay As the train moved out he said, 'Remember me to all the birds.' Then he wagged his paw and went away to war Shouting out these pathetic words:

Goodbye-ee, goodbye-ee, Wipe the tear, baby dear, from your eye-ee, Tho' it's hard to part I know, I'll be tickled to death to go. Don't cry-ee, dont sigh-ee, there's a silver lining in the sky-ee, Bonsoir, old thing, cheer-i-o, chin, chin, Nah-poo, toodle-oo, Goodbye-ee.

 May 14th.  “During the past few weeks most of us have mentally undergone a period of what the hated Germans would term ‘Sturm und Drang.’ The heavy casualty lists, the enemy use of torturing poisonous gases, the apparent lack of appreciable progress, the reverses of the Russians, culminating in the tragedy of the ‘Lusitania,’ have had a rather depressing effect on the most optimistic…The death was reported of Private Ernest Monk, 1st. Gloucesters, an old ‘Contemptible,” who had been taken prisoner by the Germans some months before. His wife, who lived at the Old Pike House, Painswick, received last year a postcard from him asking piteously for food.”

May 28th: “The value of the Stroud and District motor ambulance was on Saturday demonstrated for the second time within a week, another 19 wounded soldiers arriving in the town for treatment at the Red Cross hospitals.”

June 4th. “In the evening a smoking concert and recruiting meeting took place in the Subscription Rooms, Col. W. Capel presiding. Eight or nine recruits were obtained.”

June 18th. “Probably there is not a single parish in Mid-Gloucestershire which remains untouched by the casualties of war. Every week that passes adds to the lengthening ‘Roll of Honour,’ and the toll of death goes on.  It is this inevitable phase of war that is bringing its effects home to many who otherwise might regard it lightly. We cannot even approximately estimate the death-roll of Mid-Gloucestershire men, but we shall not be over-stating the total if we say it already exceeds three figures, while several hundred have been wounded more or less severely. Nevertheless, in spite, or perhaps, because of these losses, we know it is the grim resolution to carry on the war until the brutal Germans are beaten and crushed is even stronger to-day than it was ten months ago.”

If you want to find the old battalion,

I know where they are, I know where they are, I know where they are

If you want to find the old battalion, I know where they are,

They're hanging on the old barbed wire,

I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em, hanging on the old barbed wire.

I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em, hanging on the old barbed wire.

July 23rd. “We would again insist on the observance of rigid economy among all classes. The Stroud neighbourhood is one, perhaps, that requires fewer sermons on this subject than the majority of industrial centres. Its record for sobriety and frugality stands very high indeed, and will serve as an object lesson to many of the larger centres. The frightful waste that is going on in these merely transitory days of plenty in the munition-making areas is not prevalent here.”

August 20th. “The casualty lists issued this week showed that the 7th Gloucesters – the first battalion of Kitchener’s Army raised in the county, and containing a large percentage of the August recruits from this district – were in the thick of the fighting on the Gallipoli peninsular during the previous week-end.”

August 27th. “That only 547 men of military age remain in the Stroud district is a circumstance in which we have every justification for pride and patriotic satisfaction. Conscription would hardly have taken a heavier toll of our manhood, if we exempt the unfit and the essential civilian.

The largest and most extensively organised recruiting demonstration that has been held in the district took place in Stroud on Saturday evening last. A procession of decorated motor-cars proceeded to King Stanley and Leonard Stanley, and on returning to Stroud was met by a torch-light procession and the Stroud Military and Amberley Brass Bands. The town was then paraded while a public meeting was held on King Street Parade, the chair being occupied by the Rev. E. H. Hawkins. About 20 recruits were obtained.”

We've watched you playing cricket and every kind of game, At football, golf and polo you men have made your name. But now your country calls you to play your part in war. And no matter what befalls you We shall love you all the more. So come and join the forces As your fathers did before. Oh, we don't want to lose you but we think you ought to go. For your King and your country both need you so. We shall want you and miss you But with all our might and main We shall cheer you, thank you, bless you When you come home again.

October 22nd: “Evidence of the inevitable waning of the recruiting boom was forthcoming when, after a ‘largely attended recruiting meeting’ held outside the George Hotel, Stroud, at which the Band of the 1st Gloucesters played selections of music, ‘one man – an old soldier – stepped out of the crowd and offered himself amidst cheers.’’

I don't want to be a soldier,  
I don't want to go to war,  
I'd rather stay at home,  
Around the streets to roam,  
And live on the earnings of a lady typist.  
I don't want a bayonet in my belly,  
I don't want my shoulders shot away,  
I'd rather stay in England,  
In merry, merry England,  
And eat and drink my drunken life away.

December 31st: “ Hopes that were high last New Year’s Eve have been brought down to the dust of realities…We have learned that there can be no such thing as an easy victory; the price must be paid to the full.”

January 28th: “It is an encouraging sign that Mrs. Hudson Lyall’s lecture on ‘How Women can help to Win the War’ should have been so well attended last night…The part that women have taken in the war has, we believe, done more good for the cause of female suffrage than the hysterical demonstrations of militant suffragists did harm in the days before the war.’

February 4th: “Stroud has, within the last week or two, been able to form a fairly comprehensive idea of what is meant by the ‘mud of Flanders.’ The arrival on short leave of men ‘straight from the trenches’ has been an enlightening event, for never in all the town’s history have muddier men been seen in Stroud. Several recent arrivals have reached the local railway station literally encrusted in Flanders mud. From the crown of their heads to the soles of their well-shod feet they have been plastered with mud, but that has had no apparent effect on their vigorous health or buoyant spirits.”

Bombed last night, and bombed the night before.  
Going to get bombed tonight if we never get bombed anymore.  
When we're bombed, we're scared as we can be.  
Can't stop the bombing from old Higher Germany.  
They're warning us, they're warning us.  
One shell hole for just the four of us.  
Thank your lucky stars there are no more of us.  
So one of us can fill it all alone.  
Gassed last night, and gassed the night before.  
Going to get gassed tonight if we never get gassed anymore.  
When we're gassed, we're sick as we can be.  
For phosgene and mustard gas is much too much for me.  
They're killing us, they're killing us.  
One respirator for the four of us.  
Thank your lucky stars that we can all run fast.  
So one of us can take it all alone.

February 11th: “One effect of the cruise of Zeppelins over the eastern and Midland counties, is an increase in local insurance against aircraft risks…A correspondent last week suggested that since the Zeppelins have ‘come within a few miles of Stroud’ greater precautions should be taken with regard to the lighting of the town. Although an airship is supposed to have strayed some considerable distance from the course taken by the rest of the squadron, we do not think it came within a distance that could be described as ‘a few miles of Stroud.’”

February 18th: “The lighting of Stroud is now sensibly diminished, and although we do not assume that the town could be completely hidden from the glasses of an airship observer, the identification of distinctive buildings is certainly an impossibility.”

March 17th: “We have little patience with the average claims for exemption on the plea of ‘conscience’ that come before the Military Service Tribunals. The man who says he would not lift a finger to defend his own wife, or mother, or children from the defilement of a German has no conscience of any sort of any kind to trouble him, and he ought to be transferred to the front-line trenches with the least possible delay.”

Hush, here comes a Whizzbang.  
Hush, here comes a Whizzbang.  
Now you soldiermen get down those stairs,  
Down in your dugouts and say your prayers.  
Hush, here comes a Whizzbang,  
And it's making right for you.  
And you'll see all the wonders of No-Man's-Land,  
If a Whizzbang, hits you.

June 30th: “We are glad to see the Military Representative at the Nailsworth Tribunal did not oppose the appeal of an applicant who was the father of seven young children. In the earlier days there was very little discrimination shown with regard to the enlistment of fathers of large families. One clear example was that of a Stroud man, the father of ten young children, who volunteered, and was accepted for general service. The separation allowances in his case amount to an unnecessarily costly total, and in the event of his death no fewer than eleven dependents would be cast on the State.”

Up to your waist in water, up to your eyes in slush,  
using the kind of language that makes the sergeant blush,  
Who wouldn't join the army? That's what we all enquire.  
Don't we pity the poor civilian sitting by the fire.

(Chorus)  
Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.  
Who wouldn't be a soldier, eh? Oh it's a shame to take the pay.  
As soon as reveille has gone we feel just as heavy as lead,  
but we never get up till the sergeant brings our breakfast up to bed.  
Oh, oh, oh, it's a lovely war.  
what do we want with eggs and ham when we've got plum and apple jam?  
Form fours. Right turn. How shall we spend the money we earn?  
Oh, oh, oh it's a lovely war.

When does a soldier grumble? When does he make a fuss?  
No one is more contented in all the world than us.  
Oh it's a cushy life, boys, really we love it so:  
Once a fellow was sent on leave and simply refused to go.  
(Chorus)

Come to the cookhouse door, boys, sniff the lovely stew.  
Who is it says the colonel gets better grub than you?  
Any complaints this morning? Do we complain? Not we.  
What's the matter with lumps of onion floating around the tea?  
(Chorus)

July 14th: “In the Stroud district many homes are in mourning. In such a war as this it is inevitable that war should reap a great harvest. But in every home – in every house and cottage from which a brave man has gone never to return – there is the same brave recognition of the necessity of the sacrifice, and the same unwavering faith in the cause for which these gallant men have yielded their lives.”

All night long I hear you calling,

Calling sweet and low;

Seem to hear your footsteps falling,

Ev'ry where I go.

Tho' the road between us stretches

Many a weary mile,

I forget that you're not with me yet

When I think I see you smile.

Chorus:

There's a long, long trail a-winding

Into the land of my dreams,

Where the nightingales are singing

And a white moon beams.

There's a long, long night of waiting

Until my dreams all come true;

Till the day when I'll be going down

That long, long trail with you.

August 11th:”Capt. Eric Dixon, R.F.C., eldest son of Mrs. Dixon, Downton House, Leonard Stanley, arrived at Stonehouse by aeroplane, in order to see his brother before his departure for France. It was described as the first descent to be made without mishap ever made in the Stonehouse district.”

October 6th: “Miss Kathleen Davies, of Stonehouse, was authorised by the War office to proceed to Salonika to drive an ambulance car there. Lance-Cpl. A. C. Godsell, Gloucesters, son of Mr. and Mrs. Godsell, Downton Farm, Leonard Stanley, was reported killed in France.”

October 20th: “The Somme pictures proved to be the greatest cinema attraction ever presented to the public of the Stroud district, and we congratulate the management of the Empire Theatre on securing the wonderful film for their patrons…The pictures gave us some little conception of the tremendous amount of energy expended in this one theatre of the war. They gave us, too, some faint inkling of the immense and tragic waste of war: the blasted land, the material wreckage, the broken men and the irrecoverable lives. Their effect was saddening and at the same time inspiring…The half-demented German prisoners aroused sentiments not of derision but of pity…But the dominant impression was that of the bouyancy of our own incomparable men. Surely in all the tragic history of war a more light-hearted, high-spirited and fearless army has never marched into the zone of death and pain? The incalculable debt we owe to these heroes can never be liquidated: for all time the race will be their debtor. No words could record so convincingly as these pictures of actual war scenes the splendid spirit of Britain’s fighting men.”

November 3rd: “Roxburgh House was equipped as a Red Cross Hospital. Lieut. Nelson Abell, R.F.A., son of Mrs. Abell, Woodside House, near Stroud, was awarded the Military Cross.  
November 10th: “Lieut. J. Shipway, R.F.A., son of Mr. G.F. Shipway, Stroud, was reported wounded and suffering from shell shock. Pte. W.G. Bennett, Gloucesters, of Ruscombe, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal under these circumstances: “Early in the present year he rescued a comrade under heavy fire. To do so he was compelled to go through water up to his chin.””  
December 15th: “It was reported that Mr. and Mrs. Bingham, Summer Street, Stroud, had seven of their eight sons serving their country. The four sons of Mr. and Mrs. H. Jost, Chapel Street, Stroud, were reported to be serving, three of them having been wounded.”  
January 5th, 1917: “CAPT. BENNETT WINS THE VICTORIA CROSS…It requires but little imagination to piece together the scene in which Capt. Bennett so splendidly figured. Seeing the first wave of men swept by a hail of rifle and machine-gun fire, men falling in clusters on the heavy, blood-soaked, bespattered ground, their commander shot dead early in the advance, and the survivors halting with a bewildered sense of impotency against the increasing hurricane of shot, Capt. Bennett sprang from cover at the head of his men and entered the zone of death, and by ‘his personal example of valour and resolution reached the objective with but 60 men…Isolated with his small party he at once took steps to consolidate his position under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from both flanks, and although wounded, he remained in command directing and controlling.’

The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling,  
For you but not for me,  
And the little devils how they sing-a-ling-a-ling,  
For you but not for me.  
Oh death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling,  
Oh grave, thy victory?  
The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling  
For you but not for me.

February 23rd: “At King Street Parade, a special platform had been erected. This was decorated with flags and bunting. Mr. C. Lambert, Vice- Chairman of the Council presided in the absence through illness of Mr. G.W. Godsell, and he publicly congratulated Capt. Bennett on gaining the highest honour possible for a soldier. He then handed Capt. Bennett an illuminated manuscript…After short speeches by Mr. J.C.C. Kimmins and the Rev. E.H. Hawkins, Capt. Bennett suitably and modestly responded, stating that “the most important thing of all at the Front was luck, and so far he had been one of the lucky ones. He had simply got a bullet through the clothes, whereas other and better men had got them through their heads.””

I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em, hanging on the old barbed wire.

I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em, hanging on the old barbed wire

April 6th: “Nurse Wheatley, daughter of Mr. Henry Wheatley, of Belmont Road, Stroud, was one of the nurses saved from the British hospital ship “Austurias” sunk by a German submarine.”

May 11th: “The King’s Proclamation exhorting the public to practice food economy was read in all of the churches and chapels throughout Stroud and district on Sunday, the 6th inst. The Vicar of Holy Trinity delivered a special sermon on the subject.”

June 1st: “Sec.-Lieut. M.G. Cole, R.F.C., youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Cole, of Bourne House, Brimscombe, was reported missing in France. He was engaged in a balloon attack over the enemies’ lines and failed to return.

June 8th: “The ceremony of the consecration of the Wayside Cross at Woodchester was held on Sunday evening…The Stroud and Nailsworth Companies of the Volunteers formed a guard of honour. To a very large congregation gathered in the field below the Monastery, the Rev. Father Hugh Pope explained that it was intended to inscribe on the base of the Cross the names of fallen soldiers and sailors of the district.”

July 20th: “The Coal Controller’s plans for rationing coal were first published. Lieut. F.W. Winterbotham, only son of Mr. F. Winterbotham, of The Culls, Stroud, who was formerly in the Gloucestershire Yeomanry and now attached to the Royal Flying Corps, was reported missing in France. It was stated that “He was last seen falling in flames after a combat with 12 enemy machines. He had shown the same daring skill and gallant spirit as of old- the same spirit which had only a week before obtained for him the appointment of Acting Flight Commander.””

August 10th: “The third anniversary of the British declaration of war against Germany was fittingly observed in Stroud by the public meeting held in King Street Parade on Saturday evening…A large crowd assembled to hear the patriotic speeches…War-weariness, especially among those who have to make the greater sacrifices and who reap none of the profits arising from this ruinous struggle, has necessarily to be fought with resolution, and undoubtedly the speeches at last Saturday’s meeting had a stimulating effect on those who perhaps were growing a little weary of the exactions of war…The pageant and fete organised by munition workers of the Stroud district was held on August Bank Holiday at Fromehall Park. Nearly 200 persons took part in a fancy dress parade from King Street to the Park, and very large crowds watched the procession and attended the fete. The Lightpill Works won the first prize for a decorated lorry with a representation of “John Bull and the Allies.”

If you want to find the old battalion,

I know where they are, I know where they are, I know where they are

If you want to find the old battalion, I know where they are,

They're hanging on the old barbed wire,

I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em, hanging on the old barbed wire.

I've seen 'em, I've seen 'em, hanging on the old barbed wire.

At a special service in connection with the anniversary of the declaration of war held at Holy Trinity, Stroud, the Vicar (the E.H. Hawkins) strongly condemned the profiteering that was going on in the country.”

August 17th: “The Gloucesters have been in action recently in Flanders, and a number of casualties to local men are reported. It is some time since the battalion to which many Mid-Gloucestershire men are attached have been engaged in heavy fighting and until the present offensive move we have, fortunately, not been called upon to report an excessive number of casualties. But this comparative immunity could hardly, considering the attritive character of modern fighting, be expected to continue, and the present offensive is exacting a toll of Mid-Gloucestershire men which will, we fear, bring mourning and anxiety to many homes.

September 7th: “A great recruiting rally in connection with the 4th Battalion Gloucestershire Volunteer Regiment was held at Stroud on Thursday evening. Officers and men of the Stroud Company marched through the town, captured German guns and trench mortars figuring in the procession. A meeting was subsequently held in King Parade, a number of speeches being made. About 20 recruits were obtained.

September 14th: “Following an unusually cold spring and a wet summer the chances of a fine autumn this year are correspondingly greater. A fine September and October will have an incalculable effect on the Allied campaign on the Western Front. The awful conditions in Flanders during August did more to save the crumbling German line than all Hindenburg’s massed guns and machine-gun emplacements, and 80 per cent. of our casualties (which were very heavy during July and August) were primarily due to the awful mud and swamps that made progress absolutely impossible on many parts of the French front.”

September 21st: “Previously reported missing, Lieut. M.G. Cole, R.F.C., youngest son of Mr. W.H. Cole, J.P., Bourne House, Brimscombe, was officially reported killed. He was only 18 years of age.”

(Tune: 'Onward Christian Soldiers')

Forward Joe Soap's army, marching without fear,  
With our old commander, safely in the rear.  
He boasts and skites from morn till night,  
And thinks he's very brave,  
But the men who really did the job are dead and in their grave.  
Forward Joe Soap's army, marching without fear,  
With our old commander, safely in the rear.  
Amen.

October 5th: “From Monday the sale of sugar was restricted to registered retailers. A marked scarcity of teas was reported, and it was stated that the supply of bacon for the next few months would be much restricted. Owing to enemy submarines the supplies from Sweden and Holland had completely ceased.

It was stated that the Holy Trinity Parish Knitting Party, Stroud, had completed 1,179 different articles of wear, including over 600 pairs of socks, for the Queen Alexandra Field Force Fund and the Stroud Red Cross Hospitals.”

October 12th: “A company of Canadian Foresters arrived in the district for the purpose of cutting timber in connection with the building of the aerodrome near Minchinhampton.

Cadets of Brimscombe Poytechnic and Marling School conducted “night operations” on Minchinhampton Common, the umpire being Colonel Fasken, C.B., of Hyde Grange, Chalford.

November 2nd: “It was stated that Mr. and Mrs. Ayers, of Butterow, had six sons serving in the Army. Sergt. Victor Spillard, M.M., 2/5th Gloucesters, son of Mr. and Mrs. Spillard, Bowbridge, received his discharge from the Army as a result of the effects of being gassed at Ypres about two months before.”

November 9th: “Driver W. Gobey, R.F.A., of Stroud, was awarded the Military Medal. Major-General S. Lawford, Commanding 41st Division, wrote: “I wish to place on record my appreciation of your courage and devotion to duty near Dickebush. When driving a wagon in convoy you came under heavy shell-fire. When your horses stampeded and got bogged you pulled them out and then went to the assistance of other drivers. Your good work, which you carried on under heavy shell-fire for four hours, showed a fine example to the other drivers…

The children of Leonard Stanley collected one ton of horse chestnuts for the Ministry of Munitions.”

November 16th: “The flotsam and jetsam of the battlefield may be seen in every county in England…The wounded and stricken men who come to the various hospitals of Mid-Gloucestershire are just as well cared for as those who led the van three years ago. The lavish feting of convalescent men has necessarily undergone considerable restriction in these days of comparative scarcity, but we think the medical and nursing staffs will agree with us that the general health of these patients has not suffered in consequence.”

November 23rd: “It was stated that Colonel Cecil Fitch had broken down in health after long service in the trenches in France.

November 30th: “Co.-Sergt. Major W.J. Coward, son of Mr. W.C. Coward, of High Street, Stroud, wrote home to his sister stating that “The Colours of our Company have been carried into action so often as to become dilapidated. Perhaps you would like the honour of presenting new Colours to one of the bravest regiments in the British Army.”…The Colours were made and promptly sent to France.

A highly successful “Jumble Sale” was held in the old Market Place, Stroud, in aid of War Relief funds and principally the Gloucestershire Red Cross. The sale was organised by farmers of the district and about £800 was raised.”

December 7th: “A war memorial which took the form of a fountain and water supply, was presented to the village of Oakridge.”

Pte. Alfred Spregg, Gloucesters, of Stroud, was transferred from France to Mesopotamia, and it was reported that the first soldier he met on landing there was his own brother. Many other men from the Stroud district were serving there.”

December 14th: “We are without doubt about to enter the most anxious winter within living memory, and one of the most anxious winters in the long history of the race…Already the food shortage has resulted in scenes without precedent in the vicinity of local food shops, and we are afraid these scenes will become increasingly familiar…Lieut. F.W. King, Gloucesters, of Bisley Road, Stroud, was reported severely wounded in France. It was understood that his eyes were injured.”

December 21st: “For the fourth occasion since the Kaiser plunged Europe into the cauldron of the most bloody war in all history, we have reached the threshold of Christmastide…There will be little of the pre-war feasting in patriotic homes during Christmastide this year. It should be the aim of each one of us to celebrate the festival as frugally as possible, remembering the heavy toll exacted week by week on the country’s shipping…By this time next year the war will be over, and whether its end is sealed with the success of the Allied cause depends largely on Britain’s part during the next six months…

Whiter than the whitewash on the wall!  
Whiter than the whitewash on the wall!  
Oh wash me in the water that you wash your dirty daughter in,  
So that I can be whiter than the whitewash on the wall!  
On the wall, on the wall, On the wall, on the wall,  
Oh wash me in the water that you wash your dirty daughter in,  
So that I can be whiter than the whitewash on the wall!

January 25th, 1918: “Mrs. L. Shill, of Stonehouse, received a medal from the War Office in recognition of her services in knitting stockings, &c., for soldiers on active service.”

February 8th: “It was stated that Lieut. J. Avens, Army Ordnance Corps, Bisley Road, Stroud, was in hospital in France suffering from lung trouble due to chills and the effects of poison gas. He had undergone four operations.

At a memorial service in honour of the late Pte. C. Philpotts, the Vicar of France Lynch observed that 28 men from the village had made the great sacrifice and “he thought it would be found that France Lynch had suffered more than any other place in the district in comparison with its size.””

March 15th: “Pte. Harold Chambers, of the American Army, son of Wheeler-Staff Sergt. W. Chambers, A.S.C., of Stroud, paid a visit to Stroud. It was said that Pte. Chambers (who went to America about eight years before and became a naturalised American) was the first representative of the American fighting army to set foot in Stroud.”

Over there, over there,

Send the word, send the word over there

That the [Yanks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yankee) are coming, the Yanks are coming

The drums rum-tumming everywhere.

So prepare, say a prayer,

Send the word, send the word to beware -

We'll be over, we're coming over,

And we won't come back till it's over, over there.

Sergt. W.E. Sansom, of London Road, Stroud, enlisted in the Gloucesters in July 1915, at the age of 14 years. He took part in the Battle of the Somme, where he was wounded.”

April 5th: “The most tragic Eastertide, not only within memory of the oldest inhabitant of the Stroud district, but in all the centuries of recorded history, has come and gone, but few of us, during its passing, have not had our thoughts mainly centred on the blood-soaked fields of France, where the greatest battle of all time is being fought, the results of which will be indelibly stamped on the world’s history for a thousand years…the supreme phase of the German effort to beat down and dominate the civilised world…In view of the very heavy casualties which must inevitably result from the costly fighting of the past fortnight we are afraid many local homes will have to mourn the loss of near and dear ones…

I wore a tunic, a dirty khaki tunic,  
And you wore your civvy clothes,  
We fought and bled at Loos,  
While you were on the booze,  
The booze that no one here knows.  
You were out with the wenches,  
While we were in the trenches,  
Facing an angry foe,  
Oh, you were a-slacking, while we were attacking  
the Germans on the Menin Road.

April 19th: “It is difficult to write of events in France in these difficult days, when events might transform everything in the course of a few hours, but whatever course the vast struggle takes, whether it be to our advantage or disadvantage, one cannot refrain from expressing the confident hope that the heroic endurance, and self-sacrifice, and courage of our troops will have an inspiring sequel in the defeat of an exhausted enemy. We know that the toll of casualties is very heavy – and from the Stroud district alone we fear the list will prove a lengthy one – but we also know that the Germans have suffered losses incomparably greater…

May 10th: “Pte. T. Dean, 8th Gloucesters, son of Mr. R. Dean, of Chalford, was reported killed in action. During his three years’ service in France he was wounded on several occasions, and once a bullet struck the badge in front of his cap. He afterwards, sent the badge to his mother as a souvenir of the incident.

May 24th: “It was stated that the three sons of Mrs. V.A. Lawson, of the Imperial Hotel, Stroud, were all in hospital. Lieut. V. Lawson, R.A.F., was suffering from fever in Baghdad; Capt. J.S. Lawson, Cheshires, was suffering from poison gas; and Lieut. J.F. Lawson, had fever in India.

May 31st: “The war has not brought many changes to the Stroud district. Were it not for the recurrent drone of the aeroplane and the occasional sight of motor lorries we should have very few visual reminders of the long-drawn out struggle across the Channel, save, of course, for the presence of the wounded soldiers at the local Red Cross hospitals. But if we penetrate a little beneath the exterior it is easy to see how the war has entered practically every home. The Stroud district has given freely of its manhood…and has mourned the loss of many a gallant son, or brother, or husband since the call to arms…But it is “carrying on” and its women are proving themselves worthy of their race. Their record of ‘war-work’ is one on which they might look back with pride and satisfaction when the longed-for ‘peace with honour’ arrives.”

June 28th: “It was stated that the hamlet of Nag’s Head, near Avening, had sent 17 men to fight for their country. There were only 18 houses in the hamlet.”

August 9th: “The heartening news of the second German retreat from the Marne last Saturday made an appropriate complement to the local commemoration services in connection with the anniversary of the declaration of war. But it was significant that all the sermons preached throughout the Stroud district were restrained rather than triumphant…”

 “In the district of Stroud (but not including the Urban district) the ‘War Weapons’ Campaign organised by the local War Savings Committee resulted in £66,628 being raised. A gun was named after each of the 19 parishes concerned.”

August 30th: “A fete and horticultural show organised by the munition workers of the district was held in Fromehall Park on Saturday, the 24th inst. In connection with the fete there was a fancy dress procession from Lansdowne to the Park. The decorated lorries or cars competition was won by employees of Messrs. Daniels, Lightpill, their subject being the representation of the Dreadnought, mounting guns, being a comparison of the spirit of 1805 and 1918. The profits were for local charities, including the Hospital, Belgravia Depot, Red Cross and Nursing Association…

It was reported that Corpl. W. Latham, Duke of Cornwall’s L.I., son of the late Mr. W. Latham, of Watledge, Nailsworth, had died in Germany from “sepsis, following a shattered thigh, while a prisoner of war in Germany.”

September 6th: …Lieut. Clifford Downing, of the Gloucesters, had a near shave during the German push in March…He was left with his platoon to cover a bridge-head…Then as he got up to go after the platoon had passed over, a machine gun bullet went through both thighs and temporarily paralysed him. He could not walk, nor could he stand to get on the back of his servant. The Germans were only 200 yards away. His servant, however, discovered a wheelbarrow in a cottage close by, placed him in and wheeled him over…It says a good deal for the British Army that although eleven officers of the Battalion were wounded and missing that day, in all cases their servants stuck to them to the end.”

And when they ask us, how dangerous it was,  
Oh, we'll never tell them, no, we'll never tell them:  
We spent our pay in some cafe,  
And fought wild women night and day,  
'Twas the cushiest job we ever had.

And when they ask us, and they're certainly going to ask us,  
The reason why we didn't win the Croix de Guerre,  
Oh, we'll never tell them, oh, we'll never tell them  
There was a front, but damned if we knew where.

October 4th: “The heartening war news of this week has not led to any demonstrations of the ‘Joy Bells’ category in the Stroud district, but it has nevertheless inspired a feeling of satisfaction and relief which in its depth has not been reached since the war began…How splendid a part is being played by the British soldier in this overthrow of a mighty enemy the Nation hardly realises in its broad entirety. But it is shown in the changing colours of the map of Europe and Asia. It is a very proud day for the British Empire.”

I want to go home, I want to go home.  
I don't want to go in the trenches no more,  
Where whizzbangs and shrapnel they whistle and roar.  
Take me over the see, where the [Alleyman](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/trench/songs.html#alley) can't get at me.  
Oh my, I don't want to die, I want to go home.  
I want to go home, I want to go home.  
I don't want to visit la Belle France no more,  
For oh the [Jack Johnsons](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/trench/songs.html#jack) they make such a roar.  
Take me over the sea, where the snipers they can't get at me.  
Oh my, I don't want to die, I want to go home.  
October 18th: “We appear to be moving swiftly towards the peace which for four long years we have, through supreme sacrifice and unfaltering resolution been seeking. But it is not the peace which the Kaiser had planned. It is not even the peace which his accommodating Ministers had in view when they appealed to President Wilson.”  
 “Shortly before 11 a.m. on Monday, November 11th, the following official bulletin was posted outside the “Stroud News” Office: The Armistice was signed at 5 o’clock this morning, and hostilities are to cease on all Fronts at 11 a.m. today.’  
On the stroke of 11 the bell at Messrs. Holloway’s factory clanged forth, the syrens at the local mills were sounded, and within an incredibly short time the streets were filled with excited citizens and bright-faced children. It was fitting that so soon after the news of the cessation of hostilities became known in Stroud a public service of thanksgiving was held in the Parish Church, and was attended by a congregation representative of all classes and religious denominations. The display of flags and bunting throughout the whole district gave a joyous touch to the demonstrations. Flags and bells had not been a feature of our share in the war. Germany had been given a monopoly of this diversion. But the end of the war - the triumphant end of the war-dissolved all reticence in this respect, and the flags were unfurled again and the bells resumed their music. The impromptu procession on Monday afternoon, in which the Volunteers and Red Cross Detachment figured, headed by the Bugle Band, was not an imposing affair, but for a hastily arranged parade it was more than creditable to the organisers. The Town Band, too, were congratulated for so soon being on the scene. Various incidents have to recorded during this wonderful week, and the march of the local male and female munition workers must not be forgotten. It reminded us that the cooperation of these workers at home had been an essential to victory. The street scenes have been varied and sometimes amusing, and a little license, after more than four years’ strict repression, on the part of the young people, could be viewed with toleration. It is an event that never again will be celebrated in their lives, and even the excellent guardians of public order have not been oblivious of this fact.”

 When this lousy war is over,  
No more soldiering for me,  
When I get my civvy clothes on,  
Oh, how happy I shall be!  
No more church parades on Sunday,  
No more putting in for leave,  
I shall kiss the sergeant-major,  
How I'll miss him, how he'll grieve!  
Amen.

The Peace Year, 1919

March 14th: “Co.-Sergt.-Major E.C. Brown, A.S.C., of Tinkley Farm, Nailsworth, a local Territorial who had served throughout the war, died at his home just a fortnight after he had been demobilised.”

March 21st: “At a special meeting of the Governors of Stroud General Hospital, it was decided to carry out extensive alterations and additions at the Hospital…as a Peace Memorial.

March 28th: “It was stated that Major Paul Bennett, V.C., M.C., was still confined to his bed suffering from wounds sustained in the previous October.

May9th: “A public meeting in support of “The League of Nations Union” was held in Stroud Subscription Rooms on Saturday the 3rd inst. Sir Ashton Lister, M.P., spoke in favour of the movement, and it was decided to form a branch of the Union in Stroud.

On Tuesday, the 6th inst., the members of the Australian Flying Corps who had been stationed at Minchinhampton and Leighterton these past 14 months returned to Australia. The officers and men had made many friends in the district, and their departure brought to an end a series of social entertainments such as the district had not enjoyed even in pre-war days.”

And the moon shines bright on Charlie Chaplin

   His boots are cracking for t' want of blacking

   And his old fusty coat is wanting mending

   Until they send him to the Dardanelles

May 30th: “A largely attended meeting of townspeople, convened by the Stroud Urban District Council, was held in the Town Hall…for the purpose of considering the steps to be taken to celebrate the signing of peace…it being suggested that three days should be given up to general rejoicing, viz: a “Soldiers’ and Sailors’ day,” a “children’s day,” and a day for the general public.”

July 4th: “Shortly after three o’clock last Saturday afternoon the great world war came officially to an end by the signing of the Peace Treaty in the Hall of Mirrors at the Chateau of Versailles…For good or ill the Treaty has been framed and it has been signed…We may hope that…a reformed Germany and a rehabilitated and self-governing Russia will before the next decade has run its course have become members of the League of Nations. If we are to be free of the eternal threat of war these great peoples must be drawn again into the comity of nations.

Throughout the Stroud District last Saturday evening the signing of the Peace Treaty was joyously celebrated…Bells were ringing in many church belfries, flags were again unfurled, townsmen and villagers alike took part in the impromptu demonstrations. Stroud on Saturday night was thronged with good humoured, happy crowds…We have won a great victory. But even in the hour of our recognition of the magnitude of this victory we cannot lose sight of all the difficulties that have yet to be overcome before its ripe fruits fall into our hands…It has impoverished England…We have to carry an immense load of debt, and the depreciation of our currency is shown by the abnormal price of practically every commodity or comestible…The pre-war standard of wages has gone never to return. A better standard of living, shorter working hours, for the working classes, must be one of the first effects of this dawning peace-time. Wee glad to say that a large section of the workers are already enjoying these benefits. The danger is that extremists will by ill-considered and reckless tactics rob them of these hardly-won advantages in the same way as Bolshevism has robbed the Russian industrial classes.”

They were summoned from the hillside,  
They were called in from the glen,  
And the country found them ready  
At the stirring call for men.  
Let no tears add to their hardship,  
As the soldiers pass along,  
And although your heart is breaking  
Make it sing this cheery song:

Keep the home fires burning  
While your hearts are yearning,  
Though the lads are far away,  
They dream of home.  
There's a silver lining,  
Through the dark clouds shining,  
Turn the dark cloud inside out,  
Till the boys come home.