



South Gloucestershire and the **First World War**

The First World War claimed the lives of over 16 million people around the world. The war changed ordinary lives forever and affected everyone living in South Gloucestershire.

This exhibition commemorates the centenary of the First World War and shows the impact of the war in this area. It also looks at how communities were changed in other countries with which South Gloucestershire is now twinned.

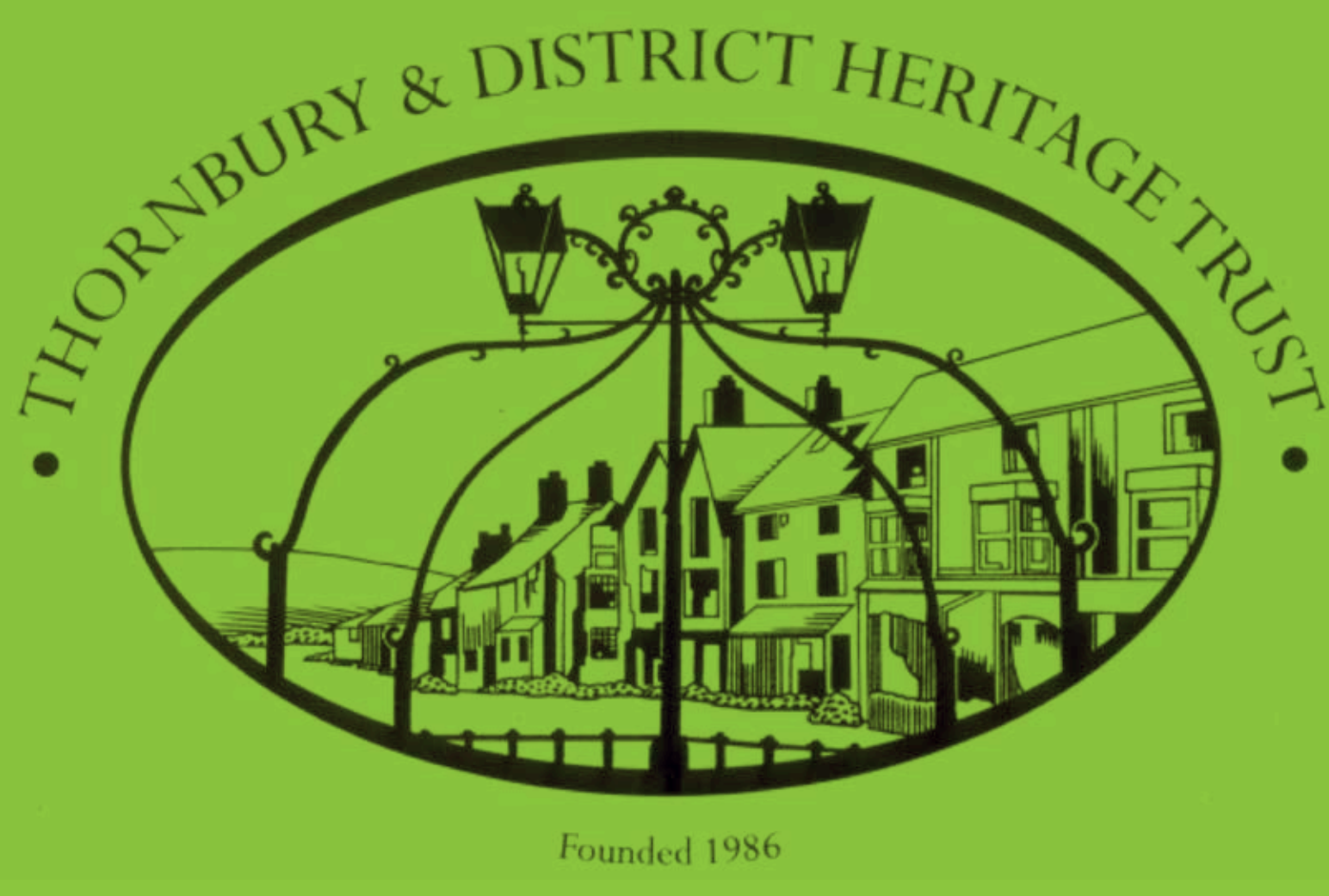
People in South Gloucestershire fought as soldiers, became nurses and worked in factories. South Gloucestershire made aircraft, motorbikes and boots which were used in the First World War - even horses were sent to the front line.

These displays include copies of original material from local organisations belonging to the South Gloucestershire Museums Group, Heritage Forum and Twinning Associations. More information about these organisations and centenary events in this area can be found at

www.southglos.gov.uk/ww1

Fly past over Chipping Sodbury.
© Gazette series





Thornbury and District Museum



First World War Thornbury

In this rural area boys, women and prisoners of war helped to keep many farms running. Commonly, instead of lessons, children tended school allotments and gathered wild fruits. Tons of blackberries went to make jam for the troops. A Food Control Committee operated in Thornbury. Eventually some foods were rationed and pub opening hours were restricted. With coal in short supply, firewood had to be collected to keep the home fires burning.

Born in Thornbury, war poet **William Noel Hodgson** MC was killed at the Battle of the Somme. His poems are a lasting testament to the bravery of those who served.



Thornbury mayor John Bond announced the armistice. At a very well attended service of thanksgiving "the bells were rung joyfully".



Oldbury farrier Mr William Phipps manufactured mule shoes for the War Office. The farmer's son, William Peters, tended mules on active service.



Gladys Oseland became a Voluntary Aid Detachment. Professional nurses Elizabeth and Evelina Exell served in France; two of their soldier brothers perished.



The Salmons, their servants and four nurses, ran a 20 bed military hospital at Tockington Manor. Also 16 local women did the laundry for the hospital.

The Olddown Troop, Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, campaigned in the Middle East, where Algar Howard of Thornbury Castle won the Military Cross.





First World War

Kingswood

Kingswood, like many towns and villages, witnessed losses as a result of the First World War, but there were also opportunities for industries.

Kingswood was one of the main boot and shoe manufacturing centres, with around fifty different companies. At the G.B. Britton factory on Soundwell Road, Kingswood, not only did the company lose many of the experienced production staff, but at the same time government orders soared.

The Douglas Motorcycle Company also played a key role when they were called upon to accelerate production. The motorcycle performed a key role in maintaining good communications. The Douglas factory was awarded an important contract and by the end of the war, the factory had provided more than 25,000 machines for the military.

At Warmley, Isaac Crane established a Firework Factory in the 1890s. At the outbreak of the First World War firework production ceased and large supplies of the British Mills Bomb and hand grenades were leaving the site via Warmley Station for the War zones.



The Douglas factory was well placed in the post war years to become one of the premier Motorcycle manufacturers of Great Britain and the largest single employer in East Bristol.



In lighter moments, the girls from Cranes were involved in sports days against the Kingswood Douglas ladies, where events such as a Tug-of-War took place.

The Duke of Wellington once said "The British Army marches on its belly" however the 20th Century Army marched on their feet and in many cases boots that were manufactured in Kingswood.



First World War Filton

The British & Colonial Aeroplane Company was founded in Filton by Sir George White in 1910.

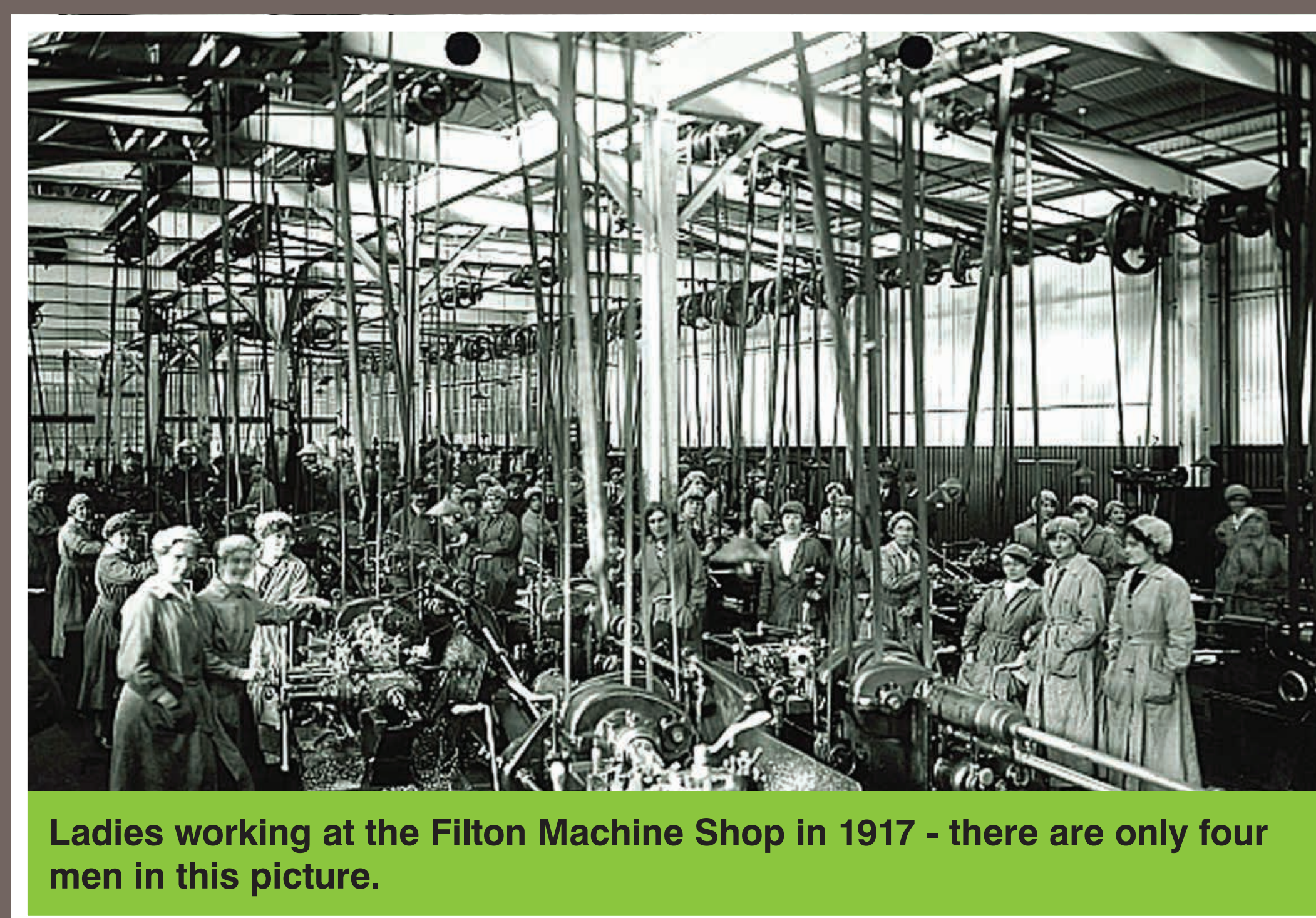
By the outbreak of the First World War, it had produced many trainer aircraft for its two Flying Schools.

These trained over 50% of the pilots available for service in August 1914. Another 25% were trained on Bristol machines.

The company produced 1,296 Be2, 374 Bristol Scout and over 5,000 Bristol Fighters during 1914-19.

The Royal Flying Corps opened the Filton Aircraft Acceptance Park in 1915.

It took aircraft from local manufacturers and brought them – and their crews - up to war service standards before they were sent into battle, at home or on the Western Front.





First World War

Iron Acton

Many local families lost loved ones during the First World War and in Iron Acton the Cater family were hit particularly hard. John and his wife Sabina lost three sons, Archie, Frank and Hubert. The boys had gone to Canada in 1907 but joined the Canadian Army and returned to Europe to fight.

Local residents decided to recognise the services given by men from the parish by raising funds to buy a village hall. Two empty cottages in the High Street were converted into a village hall. When finished it was used by the Boys Club, Women's Institute, Guides, Scouts and other organisations.

Acton Court contributed to the war effort by maximising the output from the land to contribute to feeding the nation but by 1918, the land was in such foul condition that it could not be re-let.

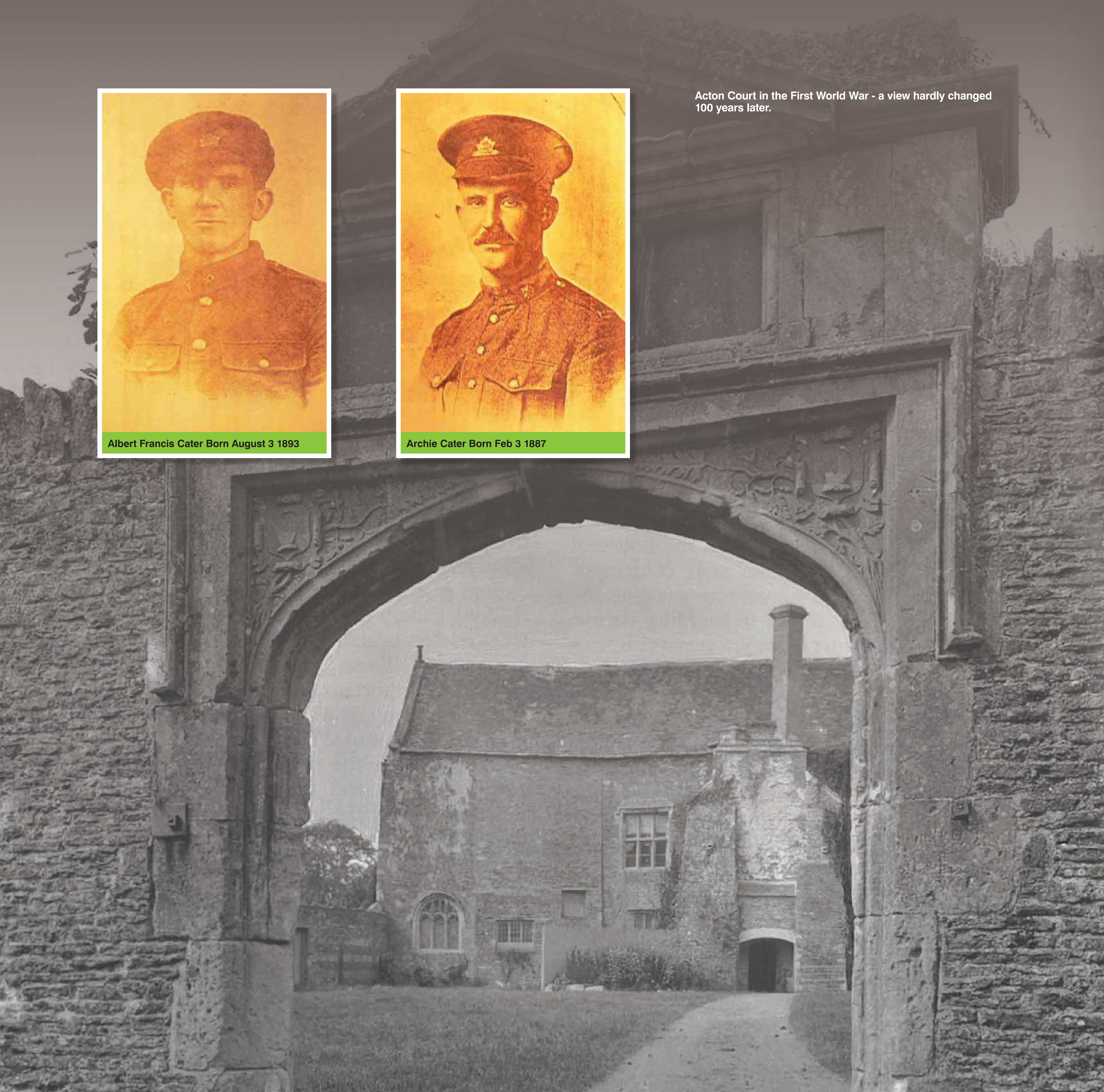


Albert Francis Cater Born August 3 1893



Archie Cater Born Feb 3 1887

Acton Court in the First World War - a view hardly changed 100 years later.





First World War Cesson

Cesson in France is twinned with Chipping Sodbury and the Parish of Dodington.

July 1914 it was essentially an agricultural community, with three large farms growing wheat and sugar beet.

2 to 14 August 1914 all men aged 20-50 had to assemble and leave for the war, with vehicles, horses and harness.

August 1915 onwards Doctor Gardavot was called up, so that the village no longer had a doctor. This was the worst year of casualties for Cesson. Eight men from the village were killed. Houses were requisitioned for refugees from Paris. There was a military camp near the village and a regiment billeted in the Château de Saint-Leu. Some villagers volunteered at the Military Hospital in Melun.

14 July 1919 victory was officially celebrated in Cesson by a torchlight procession, fireworks and a dance. In total, 22 men from Cesson had given their lives for their country.

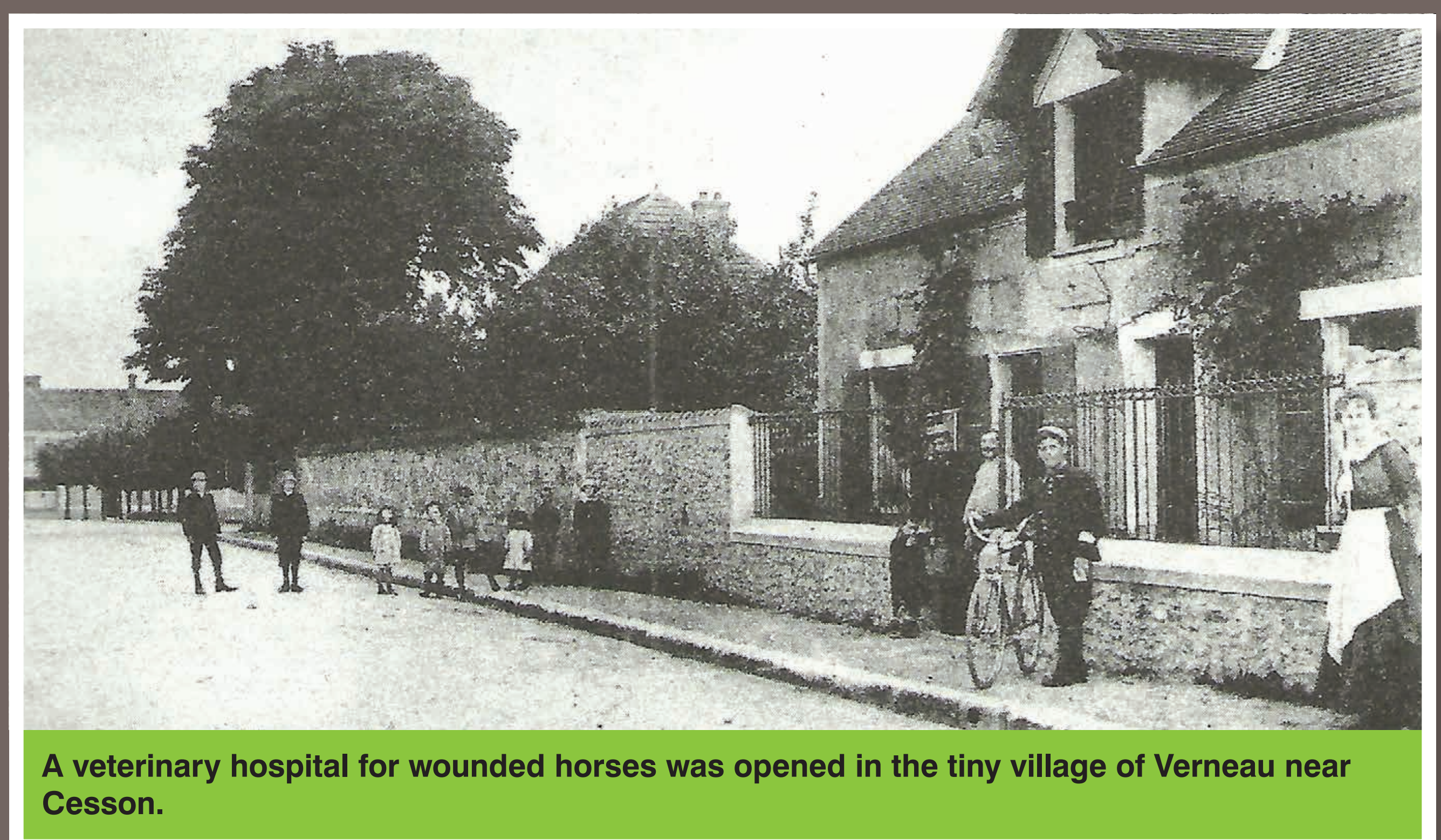
In May 1922 the Monument to the soldiers from Cesson who gave their lives, was unveiled by a representative of the Prefect of Seine et Marne.



Cesson War Memorial



Women from Cesson at Melun Secondary School, converted into a military hospital.



A veterinary hospital for wounded horses was opened in the tiny village of Verneau near Cesson.

This panel is in memory of Françoise Anglaret, from whose book "...histoires de CESSON..." the extracts are taken. They have been translated by Fiona Blair.



First World War Clermont L'Herault

There are many war memorials in Clermont L'Herault, which is twinned with Patchway.

The memorial garden is located in the centre of the town opposite the old railway station, which until its closure would be passed by passengers at the beginning and end of their journeys.

There are three memorials in the garden. The largest, a cenotaph was designed by the pacifist sculptor Paul Dardé who lost a son in the First World War. It depicts a dead soldier watched over by a smiling half naked female cabaret dancer and is thought to illustrate Dardé's revulsion of war. There are plaques dedicated to those who died in the First and Second World Wars and more recent in conflicts in Indo China and North Africa.



A plaque on a simple stone with names of civilians who fought and died.

First World War

Champs-sur-Marne

Champs-sur-Marne is the twin town of Bradley Stoke. It is in the far suburbs of Paris about 11 miles to the east of the centre. In the First World War it was a more rural area.

Champs-sur-Marne endured much suffering throughout the war. This small settlement had many young men fighting on the front. This created much disruption to family life with 86 local men losing their lives during the conflict. A retirement home was converted into a medical centre for injured soldiers.

Food shortages were especially acute and wages were low. Bread supplies were short and the bakery shut in 1914. The council permitted hunting for game to counter meat shortages. In addition extra mouths needed feeding as children from the Alsace German border were evacuated to Champs-sur-Marne for their safety.

In 1919, the town council organised a war memorial paid for by the local residents, dedicated "to the victims of the war"



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First World War Hawkesbury

There were many 'auxillary' hospitals around the country during the First World War to help facilitate the care of the wounded, including ones at Horton, Badminton and Hawkesbury Upton.

The Hawkesbury Hospital Hall wasn't very large and had a tin roof. Two sisters collected autographs from those they nursed and the books contain wonderful drawings, poems and messages from those they looked after.

Here is a poem from one of the patients:

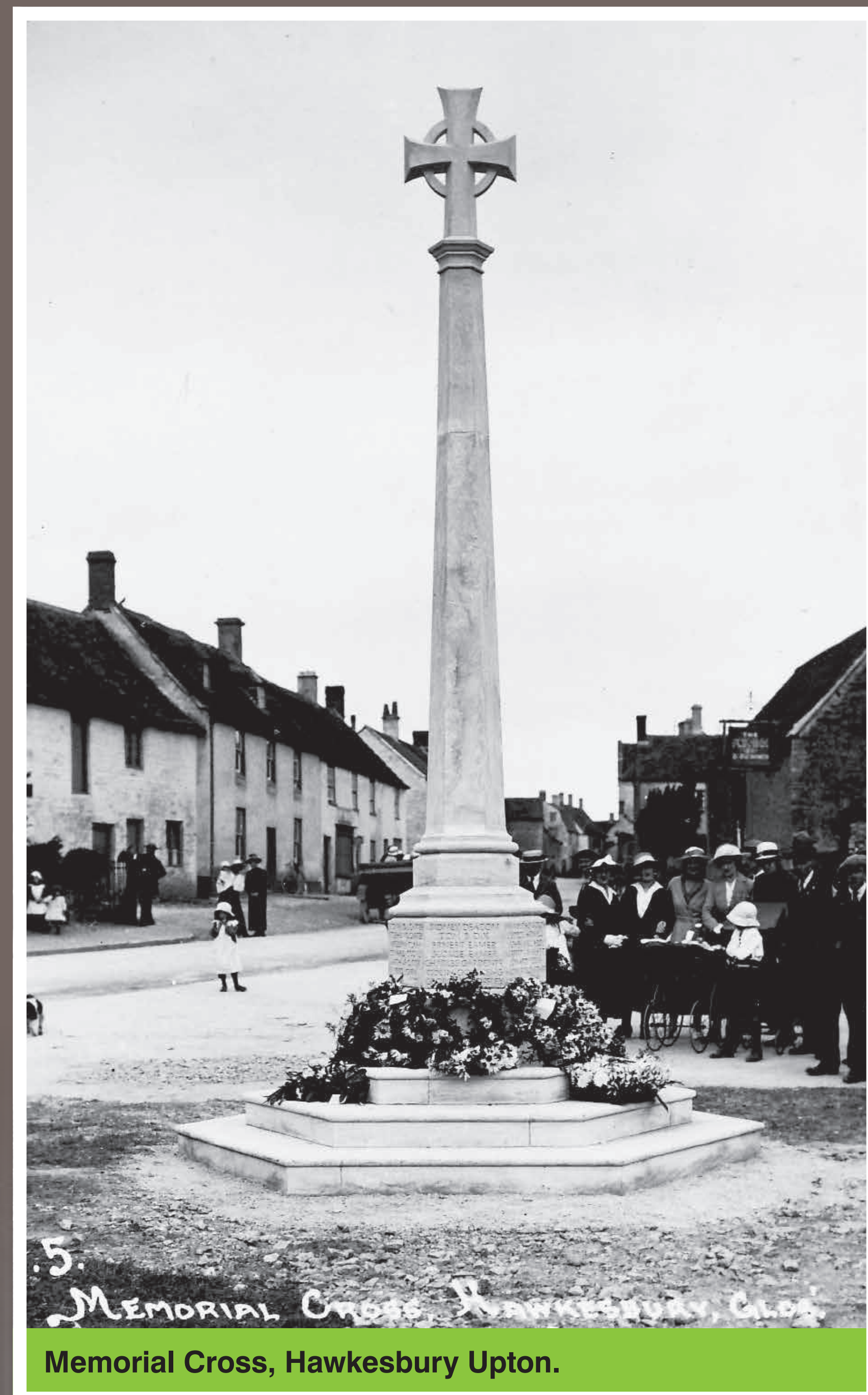
*After fighting in Belgium and fighting in France
I found a good home but t'was only by chance
It was not at Calais or even gay Paris
But at the convalescent hospital at Hawkesbury*

With my very best wishes to Nurse Hensley and the others too for their kindness during my stay and period of sickness

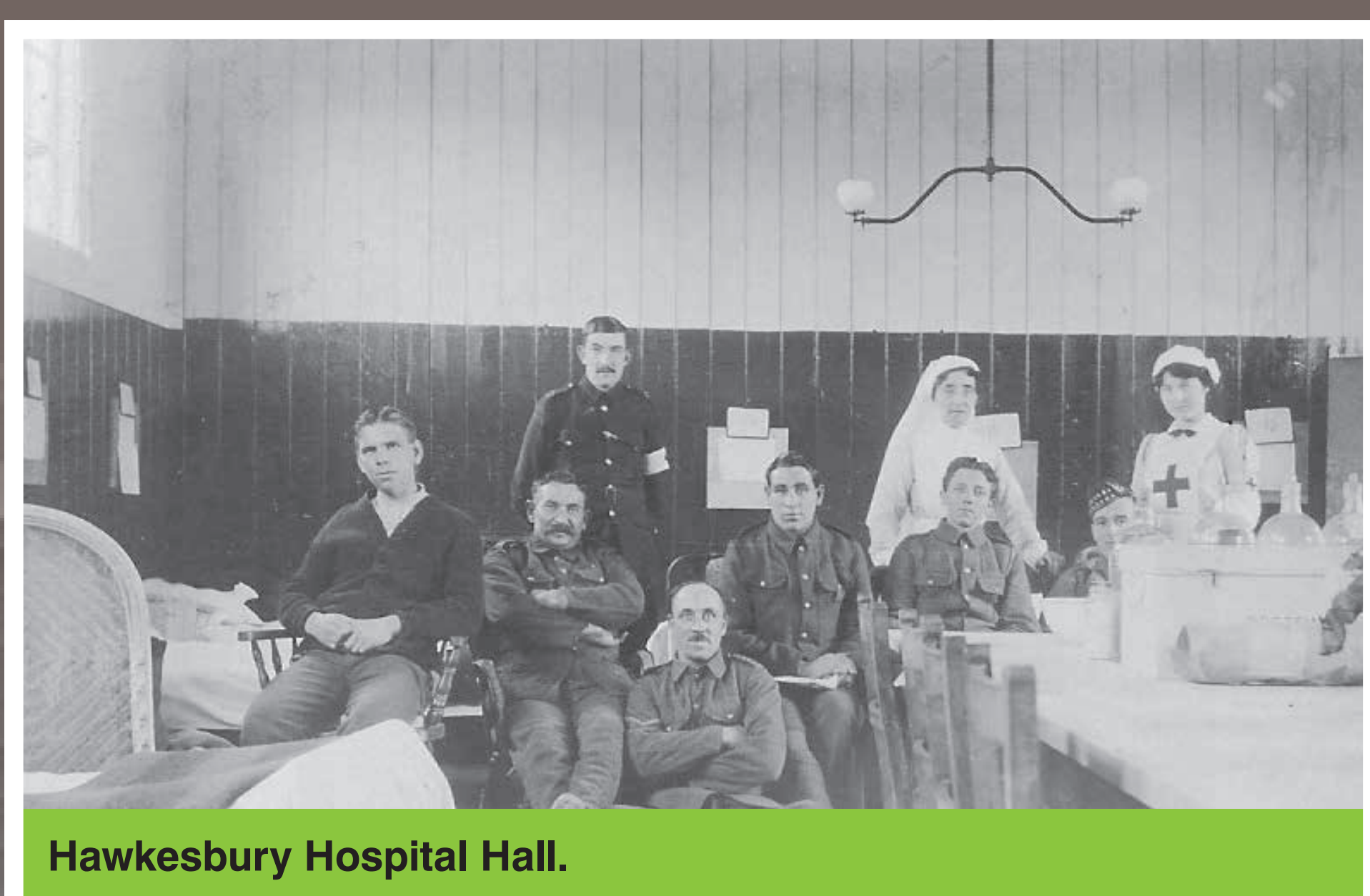
Sergeant E. Rex



At Badminton Red Cross Hospital, July 24 1917 - the hospital was formerly the Portcullis Hotel, hosting overflow guests from Badminton House.



Memorial Cross, Hawkesbury Upton.



Hawkesbury Hospital Hall.

Hawkesbury Section of the Red Cross Detachment, Glos'24. Xmas 1914.





Frenchay Village Museum

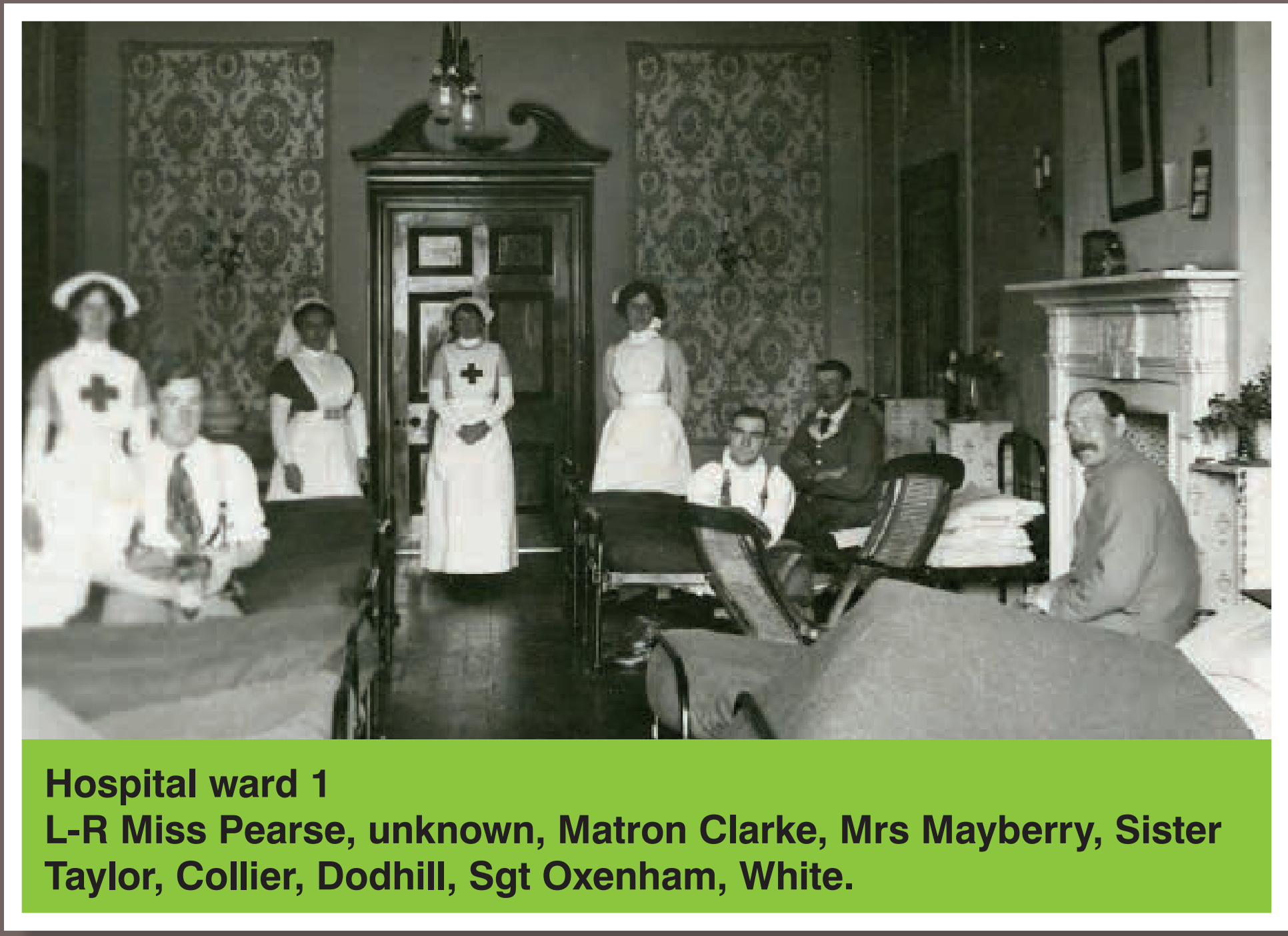


First World War Frenchay

Cleve Hill Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital, Downend
27 October 1914 until 28 February 1919

The hospital was established in a large 17th Century house owned by Sir Charles Cave, of Clifton, Bristol. Dr. Frank Crossman of Hambrook and Dr. Maurice Barber of Staple Hill were the Medical Officers.

Nursing and orderly staff came from local Red Cross and St John Ambulance units. Some 1,343 troops were nursed in the hospital with only two deaths being recorded. A large collection of photographs are in Frenchay Village Museum, many with details of names, dates and regiments.



Hospital ward 1
L-R Miss Pearse, unknown, Matron Clarke, Mrs Mayberry, Sister Taylor, Collier, Dodhill, Sgt Oxenham, White.



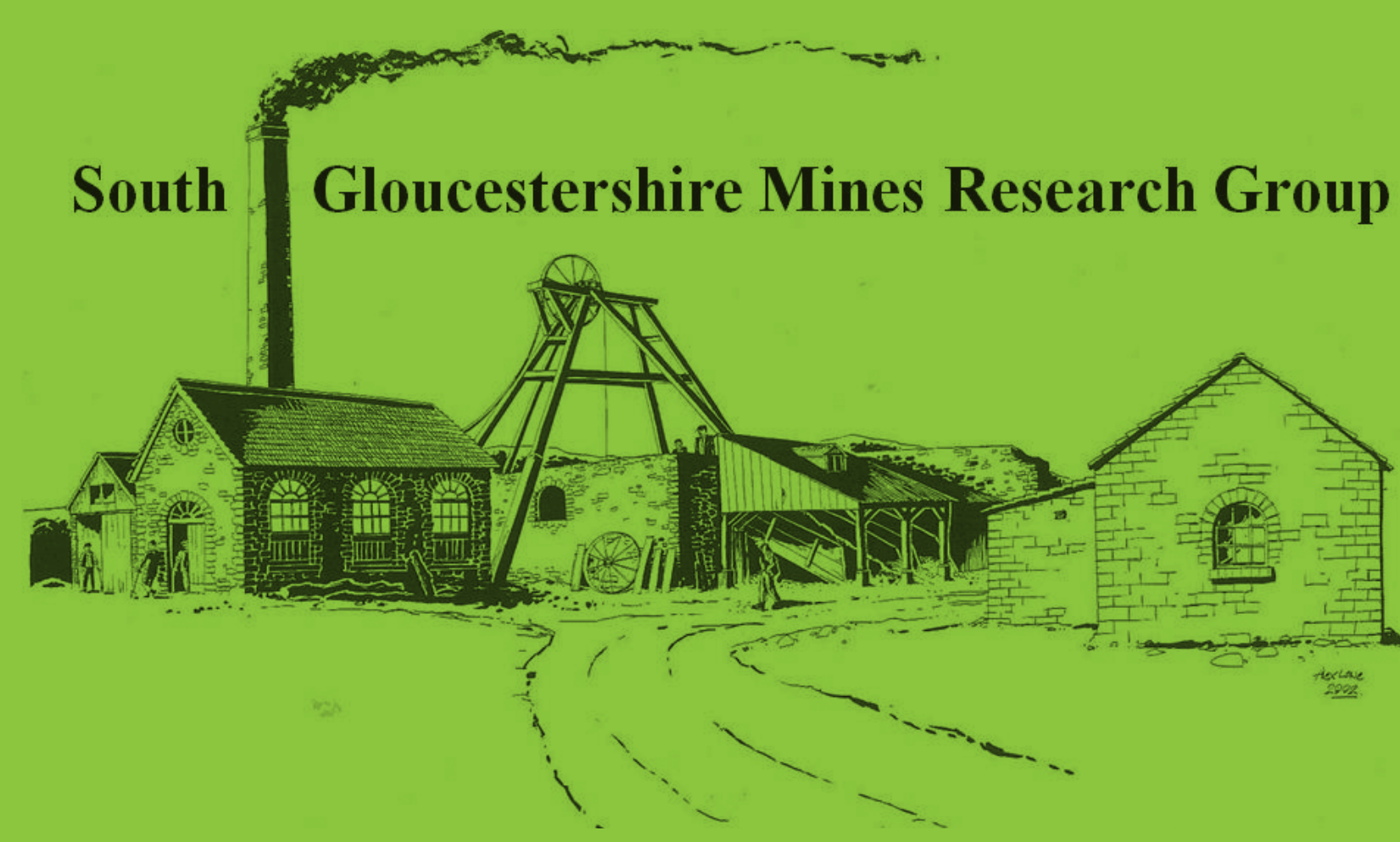
Cleve Hill Hospital, Downend, Bristol
L-R Miss Pearse, Richardson, Sgt Hogg, Miss Tolerton, M Curry, James Watson, Miss Vassall, P Scott, Mrs Pockson - undated.



Nursing Staff in 1916. Nancy and Molly Elliott were sisters from Frenchay who collected these and around 100 similar photographs.

Hospital outing to Badminton House - 1915
Sir Charles Cave is driving the first car and Lady Cave is the nurse alongside.





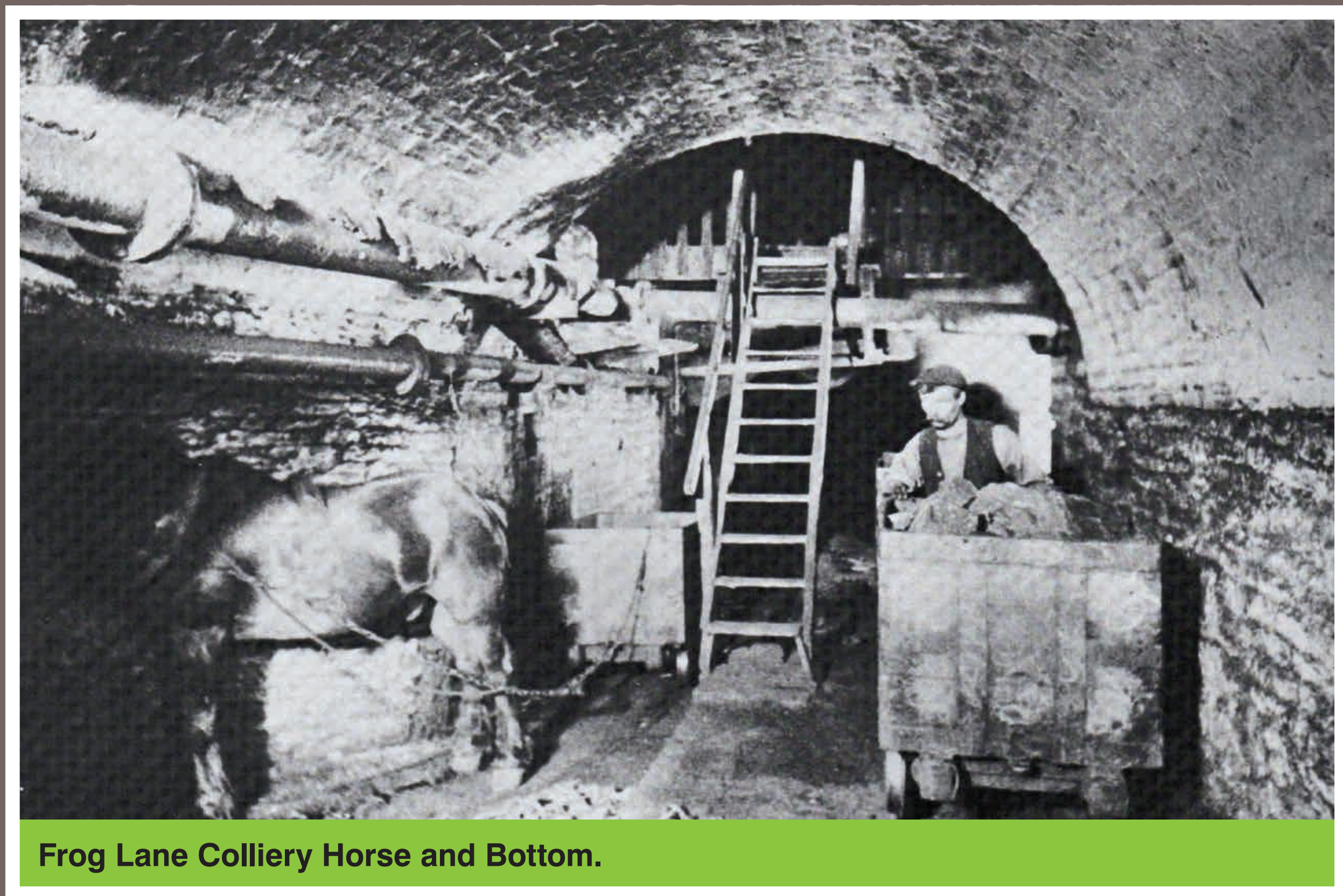
First World War

Mines and quarries

South Gloucestershire was notable for good steam coal. The outbreak of the war saw some of the miners enlisting. Many died and their names are now commemorated on village war memorials.

Rare celestine (strontium sulphate) locally known as 'spar' was quarried. Celestine was used in manufacturing fireworks, flares and sugar refining.

Stephen Francis was a "strontia digger" quarrying celestine. In 1911 he worked at the Raysfield Works in Yate with his father and two brothers. He lost his life in Flanders on 13 October 1915 with the 10th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, when he was just 18 years old.

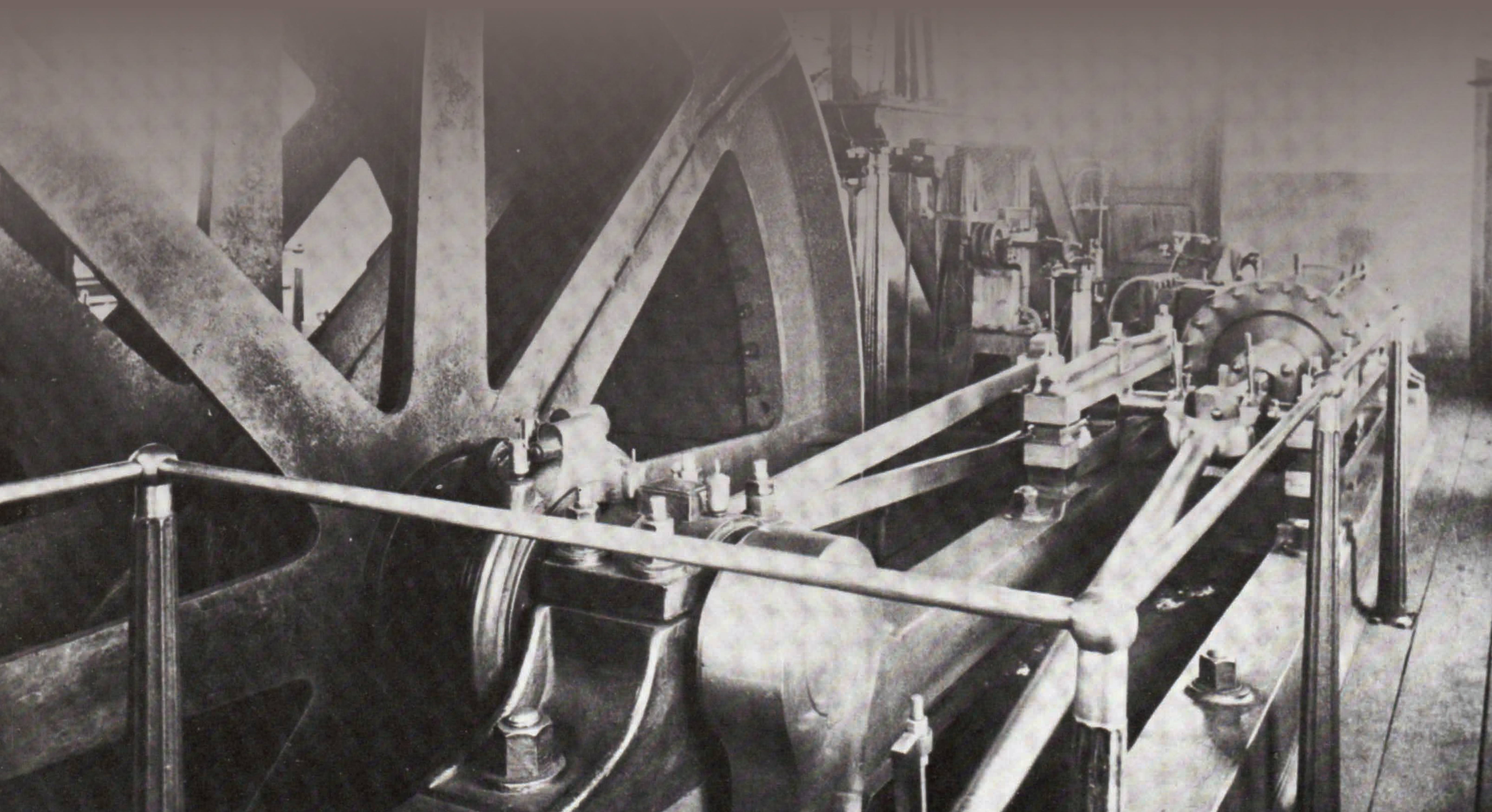


Frog Lane Colliery Horse and Bottom.



Celestine haulage in Yate.

Frog Lane Colliery winding engine



Yate & District Heritage Centre

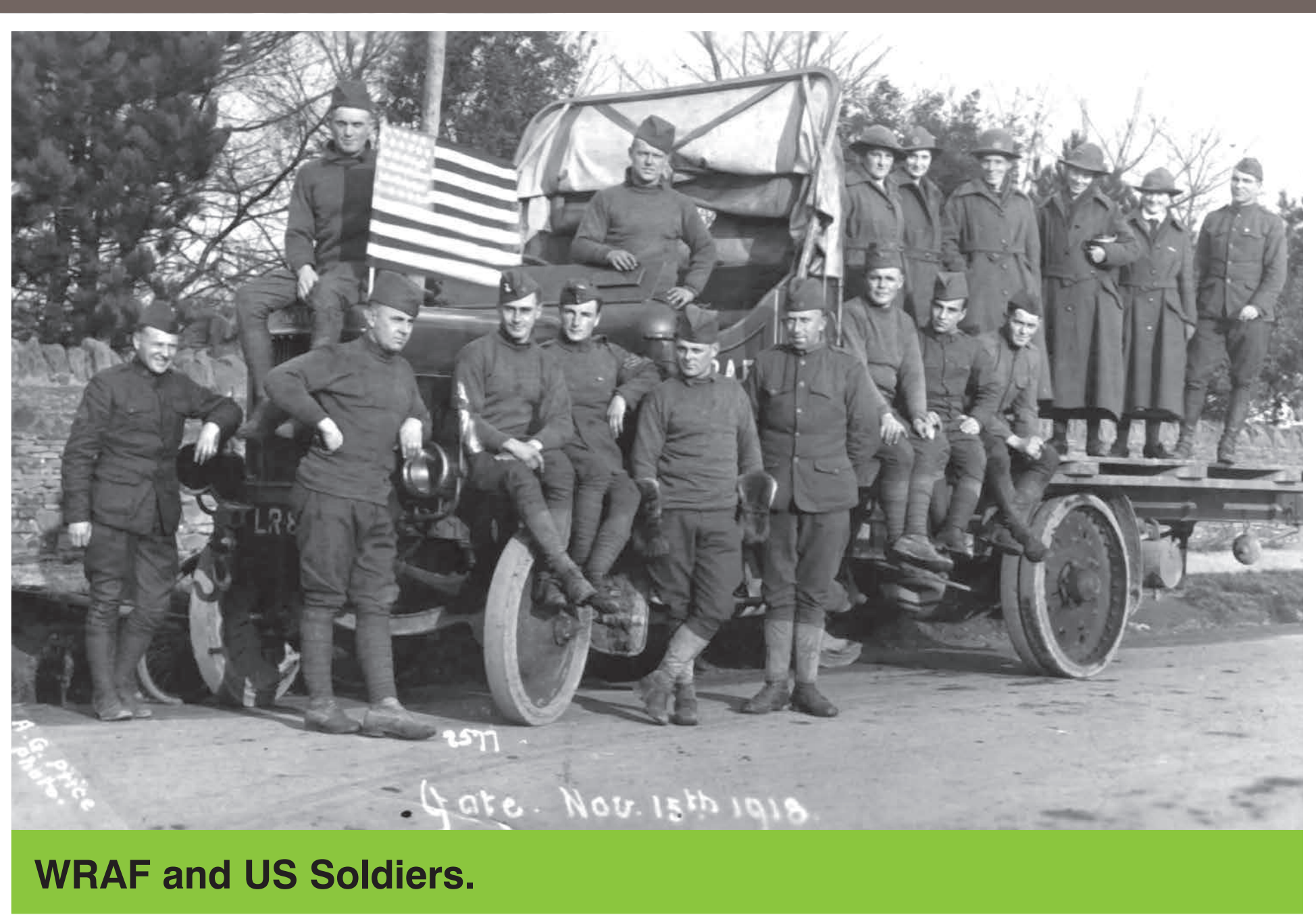


First World War

Yate and Sodbury

The First World War transformed Yate and Sodbury from a rural settlement into a militarised industrial area. This brought in a new population.

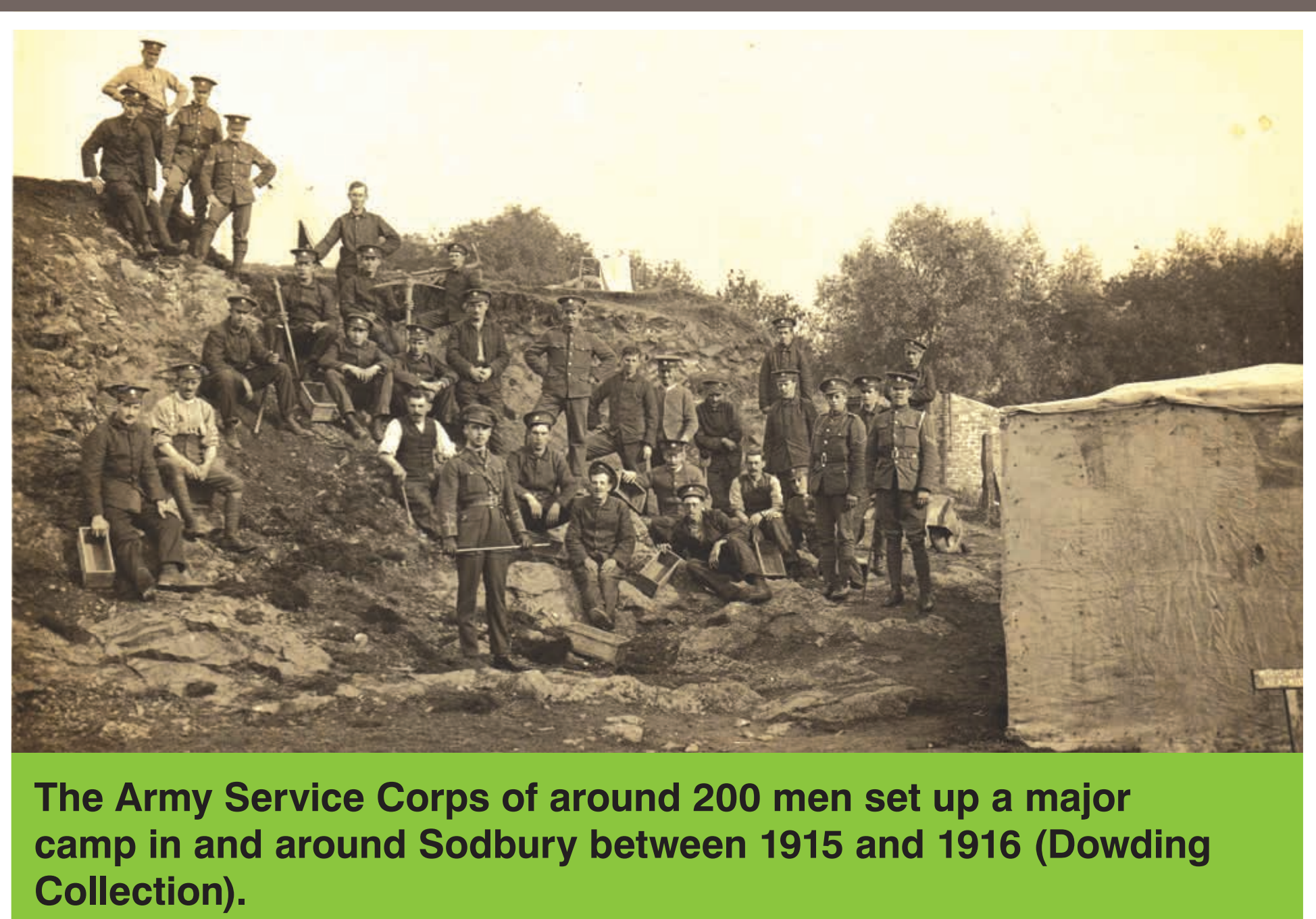
Chipping Sodbury was the home of a number of English army battalions, which moved men and materials; they defended the local railway. The new Royal Flying Corps set up an immense Aircraft Repair Depot at Yate. Refugees were housed locally, while a purpose built prisoners of war camp housed several hundred German soldiers. Many local men fought in Europe and elsewhere. Wickwar suffered especially high casualties, while Little Sodbury, lost no men in either World War.



WRAF and US Soldiers.



Market Day in Sodbury.



The Army Service Corps of around 200 men set up a major camp in and around Sodbury between 1915 and 1916 (Dowding Collection).

Belgian refugees were dispersed throughout this area in 1914, including at Dodington House and Oxwick Farm, Yate (Dowding Collection).

