

K I N G H A M H I L L
M A G A Z I N E

June, 1917

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No. 3

JUNE, 1917

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

Since the appearance of our last number of the magazine very few of our old boys have had the opportunity of visiting the Hill owing to activity in France. We were very pleased to see Richard Duckering, Percy Floyd, who has since gone across the water again, Harold Gerard, who after taking part in the capture of Vimy Ridge has returned to England to undergo a course of training preparatory to taking up a commission. Corporal Arthur Kirk, Musketry Instructor, L. Corporal John Shepperd, and Tom Pitt.

William Stone is at Nantwich and is going on very well after being wounded for the third time. Corporal Stan Clarke is in a hospital at Kenilworth and is well on his way to recovery. Cecil Calcutt has been wounded in three places. He is in hospital at St. Albans and is progressing favourably.

We deeply regret that the School has lost another of its original Staff, Sgt. George Currie who was killed by a trench mortar bomb on April 14th (on the Salonica front).

There is not very much news concerning the Hill owing to the outbreak of Diphtheria which unfortunately we have not yet quite got rid of.

The Chapel and School were closed for some weeks. When the severe weather at last gave way to suitable conditions the boys manfully set to work and dug and dug over a plot of ground in the field opposite the blacksmith's shop. It seemed as if it would never be fit, but after working at it for some time, they planted

potatoes in over an acre of ground. The potatoes are just appearing above the surface and we wish our lads a good crop in their attempt to help in the defeating of the U-boats campaign. Instead of growing flowers in their own little gardens they have gone in for lettuce, radishes, mustard and cress etc. Mr. White from Daylesford very kindly came over and gave the boys some very useful hints.

The boys and their friends on Kingham Hill subscribed £10.1.0d. to a fund started by Frank Harwood in aid of the Extension of the Church of England Temperance Hut for Soldiers at Didcot.

On Sunday May 13th the boys were invited over to Daylesford and were taken through the various hothouses. It was a very fine day and everything looked at its best. The boys thoroughly enjoyed roaming through the grounds and were very loath to leave them when the bell rang to warn them that the time of departure was at hand. What happy memories of bygone days this visit brought to the older ones amongst us!

School has now re-opened with the exception of Sheffield House and we are now working hard to make up for lost time. In a day or two we expect to be able to go down to the Swimming Bath. All old boys know the feeling about this time on the Hill - "When will bathing start??"

We congratulate Douglas Board on his promotion to the rank of Warrant Officer in the Royal Marines and thank him for the photographs he so kindly sent for the boys' inspection.

The Rev. H.G. Wheeler has accepted the living of Ardley near Bicester so will soon be leaving us. We wish him every success and happiness in his new work.

T.W. SCARFE

"VICTORY 1917"

To me, the New Year brings a Hope
 A hope which comes to all.
 The Kaiser, with his helpless dope
 His pride will surely fall.
 He tried all tactics, without success
 Our Allies bore the strain,

They stood the the test, and were the best,
And proved their world-wide fame.

2

Of course we fully understood
Their "Peace Note" was a bluff.
We read them through and tore them up
His peace! "We've had enough."
And when they heard what we had done
The Kaiser simply raged.
Of course its natural for the Hun
He really should be caged.

3

His latest scheme's upon the Sea
To sink all ships in sight.
He has a Fleet, the sea is free
He won't come out and fight.
His submarines and Zeppelins
Have tried to pave their way
A crime which is beyond all Sins
There is a Judgment Day.

PTE. E. DEARDS.

To all Kingham Hill boys both old and young, boys that I know and those I do not know. This is my initial bow to the Mag. A capital idea and long may it prosper. I expect to see several articles from old boys and will be delighted to read them all. I do not know what length our articles should be, so I'll make the first one short and sweet. After being in France 14 months I have not dropped across one Kingham Hill boy. The last one I saw was in Vancouver, B.C., Arthur Manning I think it was, so I shall be excited when I do see any of you. If any old boy that remembers me would care to write, I should be only too glad to write back. So roll up with your letters.

When do I think the war will end?

My prophecy is this - If not April, then November.

DR. T.J. HULL.

SALONIQUE

There's a little place out East called Salonique
Where they're sending British Tommies every week
When you view it from the sea, it's a fine sight I'll agree,
And you think you'll have a spree at Salonique.

When you're dumped upon the quay at Salonique
And the smell that greets you nearly seems to speak
You begin to feel quite glum and you wish you hadn't come
For there's every kind of hum at Salonique.

There are Nations not a few at Salonique
But at present it belongs to Johnny Greek
He's a wily sort of guy, doesn't want to fight - for why
Praps he's like the Yankee, shy, so to speak.

The languages you hear at Salonique
Are as many as the hours in a week
And if Tommy only knew, just the swear words of a few,
The air would soon turn blue, at Salonique.

There are lots of little camps round Salonique
Filled with French and British Tommies, hard as teak,
And the Kaiser and his pack, will find, when we attack
There's a nut he cannot crack, at Salonique.

For the General in command at Salonique
Is, at scrapping on the mountains, just unique.
And with General Sarrail in the lead we cannot fail,
We will twist the Kaiser's tail, at Salonique.

Just a word or two in closing, Johnny Greek
You have treated us as guests at Salonique.
And if you regret we came, and our views are not the same,
Well, it isn't you to blame, Johnny Greek.

If you want to stay a neutral, mild and meek,
That is your affair, not ours, Johnny Greek.
But whatever comes about, we know you'll help to shout,
When we've whipped the Germans out, at Salonique.

G. HAMMOND.

A WORKING PARTY

We were stationed at ----- 3 miles from the front line, in support to the Regiment in the Line. Date 1916, Oct. The weather at that time was very wet.

At 3.30 p.m. the Sgt. calls the roll for those going on the Working Party. Naturally there is a little grumbling. We then have our tea, consisting of bread, biscuit and jam. Time 4.50 p.m.

At 5.15 we "fall in" with Rifle, Gas Mask and a few rounds of ammunition. We are formed up. They split us into 4 parties such as A, B, C, D, each Party consisting of 1 Officer, 1 Sgt. 1 Cpl. and 30 men to report at such and such a place, and such and such a time. Each party moves off independently. It is raining and the night is very dark. Great-coats are useless as they hamper one. Then again we think of its use as a blanket when we return in the morning. The order is passed along the line, "Keep close up in the rear". No smoking and no noise, and so we start out for what is known as a "working party".

We move along the road, shell holes here and there. Many a time we have to crowd into the ditch, in mud and water, to let a wagon or a lorry pass. Presently through the rain and darkness there looms up in the distance what used to be a splendid City, but now laid in ruins, excepting a wall or Spire here and there. We eventually arrive at this place. Time 6.45. The Party is halted and five minutes' rest is granted. In the meantime they hand each man a shovel or pick. Our time is up. We move off again with the engineer and guide. We are getting near the "Front Line". Outside of an occasional gun-firing, everything is quiet.

In the distance the "Flares" are visible through the gloom. We go through the trench, water 2 ft. deep, when suddenly the "burr" of the Machine Gun is heard. Everybody lies flat, when somebody shouts "Stretcher bearers on the double". Some poor chap not quick enough. He is soon fixed up and sent down the Line. We finally reach our destination and receive instructions as to what we have to do. Each man

has to dig 6 ft. deep, 5 ft. long and 3 ft. wide a trench to bury cable for communication. Every man starts in on his job with a will. We are 500 yards from the Front Line, and under Machine Gun fire all the time, and a shell every once in a while, but everybody is happy and working hard.

At 1 o'clock AM our trench is dug. The Signallers then run the cables along, and we fill in the trench again, and our work is finished for the night. We line up and the roll is called, then we move off again for our Billet.

There are lots of jokes passed going home. We reach our Billet, are dismissed, and wait for our issue of Rum, which in Soldiers' slang is a "good snort". Then everybody turns in, and is soon in the "Land of Dreams".

PTE. E. DEARDS.

A LETTER

At last I am going to write a few lines for the Kingham Hill Magazine. It is difficult to know just what to write about, but I cannot let this opportunity pass without saying that I think the idea of having our own Magazine is an excellent one. It is very cheering to be able to pick up the pages and read something of the adventures of our comrades, though, as the Editor remarks, it is very little that those on foreign Service can write with respect to their position and doings. I am writing these few lines under shell fire (not a pleasant position to be in) and as I sit here in this billet I cannot help wondering how many Kingham Hill boys have been here before me.

I have seen very few of our fellows lately, but some of you would remember Roland Munton late of "Swansea". He has been to see me quite recently and his adventures since the commencement of the War would fill a book. At the outbreak of hostilities he was in the French Army, and only transferred to our Army some 12 months ago.

In closing I should like to wish all readers the best of

luck, with a speedy and safe return to the Old Country.

Somewhere in France,

STANLEY MEACHER.

How shall I manage later on (apres la guerre finee)
 Without a knife and fork and spoon stuck into my puttee?
 I'm sure I'll never sleep a wink in any feather-bed
 With sheets and blanket, counterpane, and pillow 'neath
 my head!

And what a scene there's sure to be the first time that
 I try,

Around my sun-browned neck to fix, a collar and a tie!
 Then letters will require a stamp, and no excited host
 Will crowd around and hope to see a parcel in the post.
 With all these trials awaiting us when peace breaks out
 once more,

What sadness we shall feel when we set foot on Blighty's
 shore!

(I THINK NOT!)

E.C. BOND.

Very pleased to say I have arrived back in old England
 after spending nearly 7 years in Canada.

At present (5/2/17), I am at Bramshott Camp, Hants, and
 drilling hard every day. I am longing to get away on leave
 to see my old friends, but owing to being quarantined, will
 have to wait. The weather here is quite cold for old England,
 but must say, it is very healthy, doing drill etc.

We were welcomed here with lots of rain on landing, but
 soon got accustomed to that. Pleased to hear so many of our
 boys have joined the colours, and hope to have the pleasure of
 meeting some of them in the near future.

Will you kindly convey my heartiest wishes for 1917 to
 all those at the Front, and a safe return home to dear old

England. Hoping to see you and Kingham Hill in the near future.

L/c. J.W.H. ELLERBECK.

VALLEY OF ENGLAND

O Valley of England, in my dreams
 Thy beauties oft appear;
 My soul is led by the Spirit of night
 To thy emerald meads in the gold sunlight;
 I dream that I am there,
 Where heaven seems not far away,
 And the moon at night, and the sun by day,
 In equal splendour the woodlands array.
 Where each silver stream, like a prince's Crown,
 Runs many a flowery slope adown;
 And even Angels, so they say, come down
 To watch the children play.

O Valley of England, in my dreams
 I often fly to heaven;
 And the wonderful works of Nature there,
 With its flowers so sweet, and its creatures so fair,
 Where God's best grace is given -
 Then there seems such an awful gulf between
 What now I see and what often have seen,
 Where I am now and where often have been,
 That when I wake 'tis true I sometimes weep,
 To think I cannot always sleep;
 And dream sweet dreams eternally
 Valley of England, dear of thee!

O Valley of England, when my dreams
 At last some day come true,
 Then will I dwell and walk with God,
 In those valleys that my forefathers have trod;
 Who rest 'neath Elm and Yew.
 There oft will I work 'neath the golden sun,
 And at evening, when my work is done,
 And the silvery moon claims a kingdom won,
 I'll breathe my soul to God in prayer;
 Valley of England, He is there,
 That is what draweth heaven so near!

EDGAR MILLS.

ALAS! 'TIS TRUE.

At Hebuterne, in my dug-out
 It was my awful fate
 To hear my comrades "holler out"
 That blinking 'ymn of hate.
 And when we left the trenches
 And from war's care were free
 I had to stand and listen to
 "Way darn in Tenersee".

In billet or Estaminet
 At drill or out at play
 The weird and devilish melody
 Was sung - to my dismay
 At the Field Ambulance - oh lor!
 And at the dressing Station
 I had to listen to "its" screech,
 Much to my consternation.

In hospital at Cameers
 And also "home" in Blighty
 The horrid strains were screeched aloud
 To all of us - twice nightly.
 And when upon my ten days leave
 I thought the song forgotten,
 To my dismay - 'twas sung by friends,
 Oh dear! I thought life rotten.

And though I tried to hide myself
 Way from the song so thrilling
 I heard it in the train. And I
 Well - felt like killing.
 But then, oh joy! the T.M.B.*
 To Seaford made me go.
 "At last!" I cried, that horrid song
 Its "face" no more will show.

But now I find that I am wrong
 The fact nigh makes me weep
 For everyone in Seaford Camp
 Sing it in their sleep.

PTE. R. WARD.

* T.M.B. Travelling Medical Boards.