

## August 1914 ...

It has happened! We have declared war on Germany!

Brandon is represented well in this new war. More than twenty soldiers and sailors are already bravely fighting the Germans. We reckon there's more than double that number who are in the Reserves or Territorials. When war was declared they received their call up papers and had to immediately leave the town to report to barracks. We know who has left to go and fight because all their names have been pinned up inside the porch of St Peter's Church. All were here one day and then were gone. Off to fight for King and Country. Even our Police Constable, Arthur Gray, got his papers and left. We prayed for their safe return.

There really is a lot of excitement amongst the other men in Brandon. The Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener, said our country needs men to volunteer and fight. This message has just been delivered to the local men by Mr Ian Malcolm. You may not know Mr Malcolm but he was our Conservative M.P. a few years ago before the Liberal, Mr George Hardy, got in. Anyway Mr Malcolm came to Brandon at the invitation of Colonel Hamilton, who lives in Brandon House opposite the Ram Hotel, and told us it was everyman's duty to enlist without delay. Sergeant Edwards is Brandon's Army Recruitment Officer and he also urged the men to sign on the dotted line. After that meeting the sergeant claimed he had sent thirty very enthusiastic men off to the Gibraltar Barracks in Norwich. All were keen to have their Army Medicals and go off to fight. Every day more men leave. Their names are printed in the local newspaper so we know who the courageous ones are amongst us. It seems Mr Malcolm's visit had done the trick.

It's not just about men leaving the town. We have troops staying amongst us too. We are all doing our bit and looking after them as they prepare to fight. It had looked like the troops might be billeted with local residents, as has happened in other villages nearby, but their Commanding Officer preferred the men to stay close to their horses. So they set up camp on Brandon Park. Our excitement was heightened by the spectacle of them assembling for parade in the town one morning. The Paget Hall has been opened up to all the soldiers so they can use the quiet space to write letters to their loved ones. It is the least we can do.

Before you start thinking it is just the men who are up for this fight I have to tell you that even the young nurses of Brandon's Red Cross are doing their bit. Six of them have bravely volunteered to leave the town and go wherever they are needed in order to tend to the wounded. The powers that be are now talking of setting up a temporary hospital in the town, staffed by the remaining Red Cross nurses. Residents are already offering their spare bedding. We all want to do our bit for the war effort and teach these Germans a thing or two. So if everyone does their bit it will be over by Christmas.