

September 1914

The lads fighting in France are having a tougher time of it than we thought they would. So ... and just as a precaution you understand, should the unthinkable happen ... the town's magistrates have sworn in nine new Special Constables to assist with keeping law and order should invasion threaten our land. Amongst them is the builder, Mr Froud. Now then, I would suggest Mr Froud would do well to take a walk up to the bridge. Children have been seen loitering around there and have been seen to hurl loose bricks into the river. Mr Froud should use his new powers to sort them out and then get to work cementing those bricks back into the bridge!

It has been a month now since war was declared. We reckon more than a hundred men who would otherwise be labouring in the fields or working in local businesses have now left the town and joined the army. Some of the families left behind are worried because who will bring money into their family purse? The Prince of Wales has created a national fund to help families such as these and there was a meeting at the Church Institute where a committee of women was created with the aim of raising money for this charity. They will be carrying out door-to-door collections and families in dire straits are being urged to apply to the fund to get financial relief. Mrs Spragge from North Court says she will find out if this fund will extend to the parents of the young lads in France.

I mentioned the men in France. The Post Office's effort to deliver the constant stream of letters to family and friends in the town is second to none. Three postal deliveries a day mean we often get letters from France within a day or two. Now here's a story. The Dixon family in Town Street got a letter from William Dixon. William was one of those who got his call up papers as soon as war was declared and immediately left the town. Within a week he was in France fighting the Germans. His letter told how he had been wounded in the fighting at Aisne and he was back in the UK, recovering in a Sheffield hospital. Then a few days later he was back in Brandon, released from hospital and on sick leave. He is now the centre of attention because everyone wants to hear his tales about the fighting. According to him, his unit was constantly being pushed back and three days into the fighting they took refuge in a village. The village was then shelled by the Germans and he took a lump of shrapnel to his left shoulder which temporarily disabled him. He said, "I was taken to a hospital in the village, but that was bombarded and a corner knocked off it, so we had to shift to a farm house about ten miles away. I heard they also bombarded that, but we had left by then. I was brought to England with about 250 wounded from different units. The more seriously wounded were left behind." He reckons he is one of the lucky ones. Not because he is back home, but apparently a German shell landed right in the middle of his unit ... and turned out to be a dud!