

### 3. 1914: Canterbury was beflagged for the Cricket Week

“The summer term of 1914 was a happy one” recalled David Stainer in his memoir written twenty years later. There is little reason to disagree with him – though the cricket team had a poor season, losing eight and winning only two of their thirteen matches. His chapter on the Lent and Summer Terms is entitled ‘The Junior Fours’ and focuses on rowing. This is a fair reflection on schoolboy priorities.<sup>1</sup> Leslie Mitchell, who joined King’s in the Michaelmas Term of 1914 just before his ninth birthday, recalled crying himself to sleep that summer over the death of a dog. The onset of war was something that concerned the grown-ups.<sup>2</sup>

The Archduke Franz Ferdinand was murdered at Sarajevo on Sunday 28 June, a good four weeks before the end of term. It cannot be argued, however, that the evolving international situation in any sense overshadowed life at the King’s School. Stainer’s account surely provides a realistic impression of the relative irrelevance of the crisis to the average schoolboy:

Mr Goss was my form master that term. One day he came in to first lesson with a copy of *The Times*. His face wore a look of portentous gravity. He read a leading article on the Sarajevo murder.

The article was well written, and Mr Goss enjoyed reading out the beautifully rounded periods. We enjoyed it, too: it was a pleasant change from being called upon to construe ill-prepared passages of Horace. It was an ill wind that blew nobody any good.

Mr Goss was a student of modern European politics. He amplified the leader, hinted at grim and far-reaching consequence. We were pleasantly excited. There might even be a war...

Nobody paid very grave attention to Mr Goss’ prognostications. Masters were never people to be taken too seriously...<sup>3</sup>

‘Nat’ Goss, a classical master, was 41 in 1914, and had the reputation of being somewhat awe-inspiring, especially to the younger boys. He had joined the staff in 1908 and was to become Lower Master in 1925. Stainer was in Form V Lower.

As the end of term loomed, Stainer, like other boys, enjoyed the excitement of the traditional rituals – not to mention the anticipation of the summer holidays. His chapter concludes:

The Sarajevo murder faded out of the news. The Summer Term drew to a close. Cricket matches on the County ground. Boat races. The annual row to Grove Ferry. The Corps practising for various competitions to be held at camp at

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<sup>1</sup> John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, ch. IX.

<sup>2</sup> Leslie Mitchell *Reporting...*, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, pp. 135-6.

Aldershot. Cathedral Services. Speech Day – I won the Divinity and English Essay Prizes. I had won the Divinity Prize two years running. My sister Nellie called me ‘the Pope’. I went home after ‘Speeches’. The Corps entrained the next day for Aldershot. Canterbury was beflagged for the Cricket Week.<sup>4</sup>



Rowing at Fordwich: David Stainer's illustration in *The Road to Nowhere*

Austria-Hungary issued its ultimatum to Serbia on Thursday 23 July, but the European crisis did not yet obviously involve Britain directly. That day saw the OKS boat races at Fordwich: two crews of old boys were defeated by the School's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> IVs. Of the nineteen rowers involved, five – Ross Ferguson, Roland Juckes and Lewis Goldsmith for the School, John Musson and George Juckes for the OKS – were to be killed in the war.<sup>5</sup> The OKS cricket match on the Beverley was played on the Saturday. The OKS won, with Arthur Fluke and George Juckes sharing the wickets and Fluke and Donald Knox Anderson top scoring for the visitors. All three – and four other players in the match – were to be killed.<sup>6</sup>

Speech Day was on Monday 27 July. The sermon from the Dean of Rochester on ‘service’ and the speeches from the Headmaster and the Dean showed an awareness of the international situation and at least the possibility of war – though this was not mentioned directly. McDowall, a distinctly un-warlike man – in the same week his address at the Simon Langton School's Commemoration Service was on ‘Beauty in Art and Religion’ – provided a

<sup>4</sup> John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, p. 137. In fact the OTC camp was at Tidworth: see below. According to the School Lists, Stainer won the Divinity Prize in 1913 and 1915, though he did win the English Prize in 1914. He also won Drawing Prizes in 1913 and 1914.

<sup>5</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 753-4.

<sup>6</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 706-8. Another of the OKS team, Whistler, was to be killed, as were Burton, Hodgson and Potts of the School 1<sup>st</sup> XI.

predictably upbeat summary of the year's achievements, including "the exploits of the football and cricket teams", but did also have something to say about the OTC:

The Officers' Training Corps was also, he said, in a very vigorous and healthy condition; "it does seem necessary," he remarked, "in these days to learn something of military training and self-control in the use of weapons."<sup>7</sup>

The Dean, Henry Wace, a sometime Professor of Ecclesiastical History at King's College, London, spoke on modern education and good manners, but his conclusion was more portentous:

Continuing the Dean said that he thought there was probably no moment in English history when the consideration of the due training of the young was of more momentous importance than at that moment. The problems and dangers which faced the coming generation were greater, perhaps, than any the world had faced for two or three centuries; and to meet these dangers they wanted, as the old phrase said, "Sound minds and hearts in sound bodies." Above all they wanted a due reverence for God, in Whose hands the issue of all things lay; the due habit of prayer to him in all things concerning their School and their country; and a readiness to do the best service they could, and to make any sacrifice that might be required of them for the good of the whole. The only way they could make these sacrifices wisely and well was to be soundly prepared, as he trusted those boys were being prepared there, for the anxieties and emergencies which they would certainly have to meet, (Applause).<sup>8</sup>

The issue of the *Kentish Gazette* reporting Speech Day also carried an article under the headline 'Threatened Great European War': "The European situation remains extremely grave, and the prevailing feeling in the capitals is that a general war is now inevitable."<sup>9</sup> It is not known how seriously the boys took all this. The editorial in the November *Cantuarian* particularly recollected the remarks of the two Deans, but this may have been the result of hindsight.<sup>10</sup>

The following day, Tuesday 28 July, the OTC (2 officers, 14 NCOs and 47 men – i.e. about a third of the Senior School) set off for camp at Tidworth on Salisbury Plain. Camp was due to last ten days, including the August bank holiday weekend. "A pleasant feature was the absence of the usual falling-off at the last moment; in fact, the number seemed to get larger as term went on – one wonders what the figure would have been if Camp had been a month later."<sup>11</sup> There were two reports in *The Cantuarian*. The second, by one of the cadets ('Thomas Atkins'), was short, even light-hearted, and entitled 'Pleasant Memories'.<sup>12</sup> The first was long and detailed, with a full account of the drill and the inter-school competitions that occupied the first five days – and of the rain. This report continued:

By this time [i.e. on Sunday 2 August] the routine was altogether disorganised. Although War was not yet declared as far as England was concerned, we heard

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<sup>7</sup> K.G. 1.8.1914; *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 698.

<sup>8</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 699. See also K.G. 1.8.1914.

<sup>9</sup> K.G. 1.8.1914.

<sup>10</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 691.

<sup>11</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 748.

<sup>12</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 751-2.

rumours of Reservists called up, etc.; and their truth was brought home to us very forcibly by the withdrawal of a number of our military cooks – in fact, one Battalion did most of its cooking (under supervision) for itself.

The Brigade Staff kept us going well, in spite of what must have been very trying circumstances, and though one by one they were called away to “the real thing.” Our Battalion Commander, Major Wake, left early on the Monday morning; we were all sorry to lose him, and felt that we owed him a debt of gratitude for the very keen interest he took in the work of the O.T.C.

Tuesday morning [4 August] was perhaps the most memorable of all. On Sunday it was decided to abandon Camp; and a good deal of Monday was spent in making train arrangements. But train arrangements are of no use without trains; and on Tuesday none were available. One by one nearly all the fixtures were cancelled, and we found ourselves at 10 o’clock – long after the Camp ought to have been empty – very hungry, rather tired, and wondering what was going to happen next. Between breakfast (at 4.30 a.m.) and 10 we had packed up, and despatched on lorries, pretty nearly everything moveable in the Camp.

At 10, a second breakfast and some fresh orders arrived; and in half an hour we were slogging down to the station, for a 11.30 train. Eventually the last party but one left Tidworth at 1.5, and reached London at 4.20. We believe that the last party got to London too, but as we travelled with the last but one, we cannot be certain.

And so ended a Camp which will live longer than most in the memories of those who attended it, unless it is at once crowded out by sterner reality.<sup>13</sup>

Arthur Dean, who had joined King’s in 1909 and would become Captain of Cricket and Captain of School, was one of the boys at camp. Reminiscing over sixty years later, he recalled:

I arrived back during the annual Canterbury Cricket Week, a great event in my life. At the age of 14 I was as much interested in this as in the War, if not more so. I remember buying 5 small national flags with metal staffs, those of the original allies – England, France, Russia, Japan and Serbia – which I affixed to the handle-bars of my bicycle. For this excess of patriotic zeal I was ticked off by my elder brother Bill, as beneath the dignity of the VIth form to which I had just been promoted.<sup>14</sup>

Canterbury Cricket Week (starting on Monday 3 August) was something of a disappointment, as the Old Stagers performances and the County Ball were abandoned. However the cricket continued, and that was what concerned Dean.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Cantuarian, November 1914, pp. 749-50. Cf. Haig-Brown, pp. 71-2: there is no evidence in the Cantuarian reports of the ‘gloom’ he mentions.

<sup>14</sup> Arthur Dean, *Recollections of Two World Wars* (1982). Copy in KSC Archives box A 38. Dean had come top in Form V Upper in the summer exams, winning several prizes, and was promoted to the Sixth Form in September. William Dean left school in July 1915, joined the army and became a professional soldier.

<sup>15</sup> K.G. 8.8.1914. The Gazette report noted: ‘The opening day of the Canterbury Cricket Week was from many points of view a rather depressing affair.’

As the war broke out after the end of term, there was no occasion for any collective response – enthusiastic or otherwise. There is no record, therefore – apart from some individual reminiscences – of how the news was received. By the time the new term began, boys and staff were accustomed to the fact of the conflict. The most immediate impact of war on the School was not apparent to the boys, as some of the buildings were used to billet troops for a few weeks during the summer holidays.<sup>16</sup> The troops left on Friday 28 August, three weeks before the Michaelmas term was due to start. The Headmaster nonetheless felt it necessary to reassure parents, via an announcement in the local paper, that the School had not been adversely affected:

The Headmaster asks us to state that the school will re-open as usual on the appointed date, Friday September 18<sup>th</sup>. To prevent misconception we are asked to add there are at present billeted in the school 350 of the IVth Royal West Kent, who occupy the gymnasium, schoolroom and classrooms; no dormitories are occupied, and no part of the school is in use as a hospital.<sup>17</sup>

When term did start, the School was noticeably smaller. Thirty boys had left in July 1914. Many would have gone anyway – seven of the leavers were 19 years old, eight were 18 and seven were 17 – but some would not. With admissions also down, numbers in the Senior School fell from 148 in the Trinity (Summer) Term to 131 in the Michaelmas Term. Total numbers were to drop further to 118 in the Hilary (Lent) Term – a decline of a fifth in just six months.<sup>18</sup> (The Junior School numbers, by contrast, barely changed at all.) There were several reasons for this. The most obvious was that some boys were leaving early in order to join the army.<sup>19</sup> An additional factor was alluded to by the Dean in his speech at the Archbishop's Visitation on 14 December 1914, as reported in the *Kentish Gazette*: "There was a general anxiety, they found, among parents as to sending their children into such a military region as Canterbury. But he was in hopes that would gradually operate in another way, and that they would be rather glad, on the whole, that their sons were coming to a place where they were surrounded by some of the finest regiments of His Majesty's Armies."<sup>20</sup> *The Cantuarian* of March 1915 repeated most of the *Gazette*'s report, but omitted the comment about parental anxiety and provided an abbreviated summary of his remarks.<sup>21</sup> No doubt it was sensible for the School to be as reassuring as possible.

The consequences for the structure and character of the School were considerable, at least in the short term. David Stainer recalled: "That Michaelmas Term was a hollow mockery... All the best people had gone to the war. The monitors and 'bloods' who came back did so temporarily. They had 'sent in their papers' to the War Office, and were merely

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<sup>16</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 720-1: 'Martial Law in Mint Yard'.

<sup>17</sup> K.G. 22.8.1914.

<sup>18</sup> The rotulus recorded totals for each term. There were ten fewer boarders in School House in the Michaelmas Term 1914.

<sup>19</sup> Boys generally left at 19. In July 1913, for example, ten of the nineteen leavers were 19 years old, five were 18, four were 17 and one was 15. In the war years, no boy stayed until he was 19.

<sup>20</sup> K.G. 19.12.1914: 'The Primate at the King's School, Canterbury'.

<sup>21</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1915, p. 8. "The ordinary school life, in work and sport, was proceeding satisfactorily; and he hoped parents would be glad that their sons were coming to a place where they were surrounded by some of the finest regiments of His Majesty's Army."

awaiting their commissions. One by one they departed.”<sup>22</sup> *The Cantuarian* gave a similar picture:

The School has been considerably depleted this term owing to the departure of several of its members to take up commissions. G.J. Eccles, J.A.R. Ferguson and W.R.W. McCarthy did not return after the holidays, and during the term itself we have been deprived of the services of G.W.M. Burton, G.H. Crosse, L.G. Robertson and H.D. Cumberbatch.<sup>23</sup>

Ross Ferguson had been appointed Captain of Football and Captain of Boats for the coming year, but volunteered for the army. He was to be killed in 1915, just four days before his eighteenth birthday. William McCarthy had his sixteenth birthday in the summer holidays, and joined the Grenadier Guards as a private, despite being under-age. He was commissioned while still sixteen, and was only nineteen when he was killed in 1917.<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Burton, Captain-elect of Cricket, was commissioned in The Buffs while still seventeen, and was killed at the Somme in July 1916.

The effect on members of staff on the other hand was, initially, slight. Harold Brown, a young science master, enlisted in the Coldstream Guards in September and so did not return. He was to be killed at the Somme. Barry Denny was to have come in September 1914 from Worksop College to take command of the OTC, but was called up and died at Ypres in October.<sup>25</sup> It was not until the end of 1915 that the teaching staff underwent significant changes. Other activities were more disrupted: “The Gym. classes have also been somewhat impeded this term as of course the instructors from the Barracks left Canterbury on the outbreak of war. However, Mr. Daniel has stepped into the breach with some success and the usual classes are instructed in Swedish exercises three times a week by him.”<sup>26</sup> It is not known how far the domestic staff was affected, as no records of School employees survive. *The Cantuarian* did report the death of the son of William Austin, the School Porter, and it is possible that others with connections to the School were similarly afflicted.<sup>27</sup>

From the beginning it was seen as important to record the names of those who had done their duty by serving in the armed forces – and particularly by volunteering. This was undertaken in a highly visible manner:

Lists corresponding to these are being hung in the Gym., 240 names being up at present. [i.e. in November] Considerable trouble has been taken over them, the names being painted neatly on large sheets of cardboard, with all particulars against them; and the sheets are completed by the School crest at the top and wooden supports behind. We owe a great debt of gratitude to all the willing workers who have spent so much time and energy on their compilation. A complete and permanent record is being compiled, in which all correct titles and

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<sup>22</sup> John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, p. 155.

<sup>23</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1914, p. 769. Burton and Crosse left in October, Robertson and Cumberbatch in November. All were monitors and Cumberbatch captained the rugby XV.

<sup>24</sup> John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, pp. 156-7 gives an account of McCarthy, calling him McDermot.

<sup>25</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 719.

<sup>26</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 717-8.

<sup>27</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 719. William Frank Austin was an Ordinary Seaman, who was lost when HMS Pathfinder was sunk on 5 September 1914. He was 18 years old. His younger brother Hugh Frederick John ('Jack'), a private in the 1st Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment, was killed in action on 4 October 1917.

particulars will be entered. For this more than 340 names have already been collected.<sup>28</sup>

## Old King's Scholars on Active Service.

The present number of the *Cantuarian* (the King's School magazine) will doubtless long be treasured by its subscribers. There is the record of the Speech Day, a few remarks about the cricket and rowing, records of the debating society, of the Harvey Society, the learned and scientific association of the school, and of other incidental matter; but the central portion of the journal, eight pages in all, is taken up with the list of those who have left the old school and are now serving their country.

The numbers of the King's School are not large as schools go, but it is perfectly safe to say that few schools can show a more honourable record of men on naval and military service. So far, the names obtainable are about 240. No doubt many additions will have to be made. Under the heading N.C.O.'s and men there are 67 names. In the R.E.K.M.R., the regiment of the Yeomen of Kent—no unworthy successors to those sung by the old ballad—we find five: P. D. Baker, — Gascoigne, C. Maxted, and W. H. and F. D. Swinford. In various battalions of the Buffs, there are seven:—L. S. Cave, W. G. Hinds, G. R. and G. C. Karop, E. F. A. Morris, J. R. Reeve, A. C. Woodruffe.

In the U.P.S. there are some 17, possibly more. Among other regiments quoted in the list are found the names of the Australian Light Horse, Saskatchewan Horse, London Scottish, 35th Central Alberta Horse, Volunteer Force, Penang, and other regiments of the "far flung battle line" of the British Empire.

In the Territorials there are 39 commissioned officers; in Kitchener's Army 66. In the Regulars at the front there are certainly 40 O.K.S., but about 80 others of whom no news could be obtained are known to have been in the Regular Army

at the commencement of the war. One enthusiastic member of the school, instead of returning to his studies, enlisted in the Guards, only to find in another battalion of that famous regiment one who had been his master at the school the preceding term. No "official" account of the meeting has been forthcoming as yet. Nearly 50 names appear under the heading—Navy and Royal Marines. Many of the names in these lists are names well known in the city and in Kent. In not a few instances the names of three brothers from one family appear. Up to the present those mentioned in despatches are as follows:—Colonel E. R. Carter, C.M.G., M.V.O. (1881-1885), A.S.C., General Headquarters Staff; Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. Sandilands (1877-1879), R.F.A., General Headquarters Staff; Major E. W. B. Green (1883-1885), 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment; Rev. J. G. W. Tuckey (1874-1883), Chaplain 1st Class, General Headquarters Staff; Flight Commander Spenser D. A. Grey, R.N. (1897-1899) awarded D.S.O. With two other airmen he took part in the remarkable raid into Germany, resulting in much damage to the Dusseldorf airsheds. It is the custom in the "Cantuarian" to write the word "valet" over the names of those leaving school. That word of farewell must now be written with a deeper meaning over the names of some fallen or missing for a prolonged period:—C. F. H. Trueman (1889-1893), Captain 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex; R. F. H. Henderson (1895-1903), Lieutenant Connaught Rangers; C. F. Battersby (1900-1905), Captain R.F.A.; R. S. Glyn (1904-1910), 2nd Lieutenant, The Buffs. To the more distinguished boys on leaving school is given a special greeting, which can never be more fitly or more honourably applied than to the foregoing: "Virtute functi more patrum duces."

Reprinted from the "Kentish Gazette" of November 28, 1914.

*The Cantuarian's* summary of 'Old King's Scholars on Active Service' was published in the *Kentish Gazette* and then in turn as a separate leaflet.<sup>29</sup> The 'permanent record' was to be published in *The Cantuarian* and as a pamphlet. The original exercise book in which the names and details were recorded is in the School Archives, though this was probably not started until 1915. It only gradually became apparent that the 'roll of honour' would be much more significant.

<sup>28</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 728.

<sup>29</sup> K.G. 28.11.1914; KSC Archives: Scrapbook 1, p. 53.

One should be careful not to exaggerate the effects of war at this point. The prevailing view both nationally and locally was that life should go on as normal. The Dean and Chapter were of the same opinion and the Chapter Act Book, which recorded their monthly meetings, reveals an initially cautious approach to events. In October, for example, ‘It was agreed not to effect any special Insurance of the Cathedral against War risks.’<sup>30</sup> In November, it was noted that there had been a drop in receipts from Visitors’ Fees, because of the decreasing number of ‘tourists and holiday-makers who usually visit the Cathedral’, but, conversely, there was no longer any need for the ‘special precautions to guard the Cathedral against outrages by women’. The main concern was a practical one: 721 chairs were to be purchased for the military parade services in the nave.<sup>31</sup>

This last decision caused some minor disruption to School life:

This term we have been unable to hold our Sunday afternoon Services in our own Chapel [i.e. in the South Transept]; all the chairs in it have been requisitioned for use in the Nave, where a Territorials’ Church Parade Service is held every Sunday at 9.15 a.m.; consequently the School has to use the Presbytery in the Choir, between the throne and the altar rails, and the old Chapel harmonium [instead of the recently acquired organ] is again in use, being placed on the steps on the Chapel side of the Choir.<sup>32</sup>

‘A Correspondent’, writing to the *Kentish Gazette*, made something of a mountain out of this molehill-like decision: “The school was somewhat summarily ejected from its chapel in the South Transept when hasty arrangements had to be made for the ‘Territorial’ service in the Cathedral.”<sup>33</sup> The fact that an issue like this created such a commotion suggests that the upheaval caused by the war was in practice relatively minor.

The possibility of air raids might have raised more serious concerns. Two letters to *The Cantuarian* of November 1914 picked up on the issue. ‘Scaremonger’ wondered about the adequacy of fire practices:

Surely with all these rumours of Zeppelin invasions and air raids it is advisable to be more or less prepared against an outbreak of fire in the School. Yet when did we last practice Fire Drill...? True, the other day we were greeted with the spectacle of hoses hung out of one of the top windows which had doubtless been tested by the zealous Canterbury Fire Brigade. Yet could a member say, of the Lower House, manage to climb down the rope without rubbing all the skin off his hands and knees with any appreciable speed? The proceeding is a difficult one even in the daytime, but at night... Hoping to see some notice taken of this appeal.

And ‘A Lesser Light’ turned his attention to the blackout:

Will you allow me a modicum of your invaluable space in which to protest against the iniquitous state of the Mint Yard illumination. In ordinary times the lamp by the arches [i.e. the undercroft below the Schoolroom] was barely sufficient to prevent one from running into the Mint Yard tree on moonless

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<sup>30</sup> Chapter Act Book 1910-19: 31 October 1914. CCA-DCc-CA/16.

<sup>31</sup> Chapter Act Book 1910-19: 29 November 1914. CCA-DCc-CA/16.

<sup>32</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 717.

<sup>33</sup> K.G. 28.11.1914.

nights; but now that the top of it has been blacked over besides treading everyone of the puddles with which the place abounds, one has some ado to find one's way across it at all.

Are the vigours of war such that our one guide to safety must be practically extinguished? Would the flickering of that lamp have such a fascination for hostile airmen that they would be constrained to drop bombs on the Mint Yard, or is it feared that its blinding glare might discover the Bell Harry to wandering Zeppelins?

Really, sirs, when the lights of the town are burning on happily outside, I cannot see the point of extinguishing our little glow-worm.<sup>34</sup>

The blackout was in fact taken seriously in Canterbury. There were numerous references in the local newspapers to proceedings against those infringing the regulations. From the boys' point of view, however, it all seemed very inconvenient.

The routine of the timetable made it easier to feel that school life really was carrying on as normal. The rugby season had a familiar air to it, though there were some changes in the fixtures. The matches against Dover College, Merchant Taylors' and Eastbourne went ahead, but the OKS match was cancelled and opponents included some military sides, such as the Royal Field Artillery Brigade and the King's Liverpool Regiment. The Harvey Society had talks on 'The History of Nations as revealed by words', 'Norway', 'Ghosts' and 'Stalactites' as well as the more obviously topical 'Naval Warfare'. Visiting speakers lectured on 'Wonders of Bee Life' and 'Domestic Architecture'. When the Headmaster had occasion to write to parents on 27 September and 13 October it was about two cases of scarlet fever – one "no doubt caught from one of the bootboys of the House" and another "also very mild".<sup>35</sup>

The Debating Society turned to the War for their only recorded meeting of the term. On Monday 12 October, the motion was that "In the opinion of this House, at the end of the present war the time will have come for the disputes of the great powers to be settled by arbitration." This was proposed by the Captain of School, William Janson Potts, who commented: "War... was a mere folly of this earth's hot-headed youth, the distribution of peoples was as good as fixed now; it was time for the nations to "settle down". He was to be killed serving with the Royal Flying Corps in September 1917. Other speakers were Geoffrey Burton and Noel Gough, both to be killed, and Archer Lindsey, Leslie Best, Hubert Madge, Henry Wace, Llewellyn Thomas, Lennox Robertson and Bernard Galpin, all of whom were to serve in the conflict. The seriousness of the issue being discussed is not always apparent in the relatively light-hearted tone of the report in *The Cantuarian*. However almost exactly half the School was present and the motion was comfortably lost by 17 votes to 49.<sup>36</sup>

One of the most obvious effects of the outbreak of war was on the OTC, which suddenly seemed much more relevant to boys' lives. "The whole of the Senior School are members of the Corps, with the exception of three of whom two are physically incapacitated

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<sup>34</sup> The Cantuarian, December 1914, p. 781. Letters to the magazine were generally signed with more or less witty pseudonyms.

<sup>35</sup> KSC Archives: Scrapbook 1, p. 52. There had been an earlier letter about scarlet fever on 1 June, when a dayboy had 'a mild attack'.

<sup>36</sup> The Cantuarian, November 1914, pp. 741-43.

from joining” observed *The Cantuarian*.<sup>37</sup> It seems likely that the other non-member may have been David Stainer. He noted in his autobiography that his father was a pacifist and would not let him join.<sup>38</sup> OTC parades were more frequent – and were taken more seriously:

The knowledge of the great struggle which is raging comparatively near to us has naturally stirred everyone, from officer to recruit, to an unprecedented enthusiasm for matters military. The usual weekly C.O.’s parade is now – weather permitting – always a long one, and Platoon drill goes on in the Mint Yard at from 12.15 to 1 o’clock three times a week; the fact that many turn up voluntarily for extra parades shews that there is no lack of the proper spirit.

The C.O., with all the officers generally, has shown admirable enthusiasm and energy in complying with the general demand for increased efficiency and more training. A “Commission Class” has been formed of the senior members for more advanced work than can be done by the Corps in general; so that any who may later apply for commissions may be well prepared.<sup>39</sup>

The visible presence of troops in the city added to the sense that the School was somehow participating in a great event. There were soldiers based at Sturry, Fordwich, Scotland Hills and Barton Fields, as well as at the Barracks:

Canterbury, as a military depot of some importance, has of course been inundated with troops for the last three months, largely with men of the new Army. Besides the usual accommodation at the Barracks, which have been full to overflowing, there are numerous camps round the City.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, some of the senior officers were billeted in the Archbishop’s Palace.

In many ways, therefore, the War brought excitement to school life. There was even a royal visit:

On Monday, Oct. 26th, the King came down to Canterbury to inspect the troops quartered here. The visit was quite private, but a considerable crowd collected at various places on the route; the School went up *en masse* to Longport and cheered His Majesty vigorously as he passed.<sup>41</sup>

There were also visits from serving OKS who were stationed nearby or just passing through:

We have been glad to see a number of O.K.S., who have taken commissions, down here; more than a dozen have been stationed round Canterbury, and several at Dover.<sup>42</sup>

The collection at the first service of the term was for Belgian Relief.<sup>43</sup> Refugees and wounded soldiers were a visible reminder of what was happening across the channel:

There are now many Belgian wounded and convalescent soldiers in hospitals in Canterbury, and three Belgian Officers who walked past the Green Court and

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<sup>37</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 747. Full records of the OTC are in the School Archives.

<sup>38</sup> John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, pp. 123 and 136-7. David Stainer’s name is not in the Contingent Record, but his younger brother Peter, who entered the school in 1915, did join the OTC.

<sup>39</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 747.

<sup>40</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 718.

<sup>41</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 719.

<sup>42</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 723. Cf. John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, pp. 155-6. The OKS Visitors Book has few names in it for this term, but that may not be an accurate record of who came.

<sup>43</sup> Preachers Book 1910-31, Michaelmas Term 1914.

through the Mint Yard in the Break some three weeks ago were given a hearty welcome by a large part of the School, who turned out under the arches and gave them three rousing cheers, which were answered by a salute.<sup>44</sup>

At an instrumental concert in the Parry Library in December, in addition to members of the School and the precincts community, “a number of Belgian ladies and gentlemen and a few English officers were also present”.<sup>45</sup>

The outbreak of war was not necessarily seen in exclusively patriotic terms. It is not surprising that when in a debate the Captain of School “struck the patriotic note... by an early prayer for the overthrow of Potsdam” his comments were greeted by “a rich vein of applause”. Yet at the same time, *The Cantuarian* published a far from bellicose hymn ‘In Time of War’ by the Revd Francis Perkins O.K.S, Vicar of St Maurice’s, York – “On Thy sons in strife arrayed We beseech Thee, Look, – and lend Thy pitying aid” – noting that it had been used “with considerable appreciation”, which should be seen beside ‘An Imperial Anthem’ by the Dean – ‘God Save the British Empire’ – set to music by Music Master Percy Godfrey and published by Boosey & Co.<sup>46</sup> Support for the Allies was at least as important as any British interest. Godfrey made a point of teaching other national anthems (in the original languages) and a School Concert on 7 November 1914 “was brought to an appropriate close by the playing of the National Anthems of the Allies”.<sup>47</sup>

The November issue of *The Cantuarian* had to take due account of the war. It was considerably longer than usual – 68 pages compared to 48 in November 1913. As well as reporting Speech Day and the conclusion of the cricket season, the magazine included four obituaries of O.K.S killed on active service, as well as four pages of ‘Letters from the Front’ and nine pages listing ‘O.K.S. in His Majesty’s Forces’. These last two were to be regular features for the next four years. Much of the O.K.S news concerned those serving and the O.K.S Letter, usually from Oxford and Cambridge, was from the University and Public Schools Brigade at Epsom. The correspondence pages included a letter from a group of England cricketers appealing on behalf of the Prince of Wales’ Fund. Two articles were directly related to the war. ‘Martial Law in the Mint Yard’ described the billeting of troops in the holidays, as mentioned above.<sup>48</sup> ‘A Bit of Belgium at the Outbreak of the War’ – unfortunately not signed – was an account from someone who was at Knocke near Ostend when war was declared. The writer heard news of the bombardment of Liège, witnessed anti-German demonstrations and visited Bruges, before finally returning to England.<sup>49</sup>

It is a mistake, of course, to regard the pre-war period as some kind of idyll – in school or in country – that was shattered in August 1914. Equally it was far from obvious at the time, particularly to schoolboys, that the War would be long and bloody. There seems to have been a feeling that war was something of a glorious adventure. The early events had

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<sup>44</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, p. 718. David Stainer, who lived in Folkestone, was particularly conscious of this, not least as his mother worked in a new hospital. John Cropton, *The Road to Nowhere*, pp. 149-55.

<sup>45</sup> K.G. 26.12.1914. The concert does not appear to have been reported in *The Cantuarian*.

<sup>46</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914 pp. 737-8 and December 1914, p. 768.

<sup>47</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1914, p. 769. Cf. a letter, dated 25 September 1976, from Philip Elliott, who had joined the Junior School in 1914, on Godfrey making his form learn the Russian national anthem. Archives box P5, Percy Godfrey.

<sup>48</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 720-21.

<sup>49</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1914, pp. 744-46.

indeed been dramatic, especially the Battles of Mons and the Marne, not to mention Tannenberg. There was even a sense of excitement that great events were unfolding and that the boys were in some degree involved in them. Yet at the same time, routine kept King's School boys firmly anchored in the familiar. For the School itself, at least for the time being, it really did seem like business as usual.