

## 5. All alike should ‘carry on’

Any attempt to provide a coherent account of the King’s School in wartime is inherently difficult. The War was at once irrelevant to boys’ lives and threateningly oppressive. The School did its best to maintain its daily routine, but it had to do so in increasingly abnormal conditions. *The Cantuarian* editorial in March 1916 could claim that “during the past two terms we have been more or less free from the immediate effects of the war”, but then it went on to say that “we have, then, grown accustomed to startling changes”.<sup>1</sup> Like it or not, the School was part of the Home Front and by the end the War had had an impact on every aspect of school life.

In the minutes of the School governors’ meetings from 1914 to 1918 the War is barely mentioned directly at all. The one specific reference comes in July 1915 when the Headmaster was allowed to charge the maximum boarding fee “during the continuation of the War”, though in October 1915 item 4 in the minutes read: “Application for Grant towards cost of obscuring lights. Resolved that the cost of blinds £11.8.9 be paid.” Otherwise the main issues discussed were the appointment and salaries of assistant masters, fees, the annual accounts, building repairs, the award of exhibitions and other such routine matters.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, the Dean and Chapter – the same men in a different role – were much concerned with war-related matters and held several special meetings to deal with them. Their deliberations, recorded in the Chapter Act Books, obviously had an effect on the School. In October 1915 it was decided to close the Precincts Gates at 5pm. This was slightly relaxed in 1916, but no return to normality was even considered until after the war was over. The first bomb had been dropped in Dover on Christmas Eve 1914, and the possible danger from enemy aircraft in Canterbury was gradually recognised. In 1915 sandbags were placed to protect the tomb of the Black Prince and some other monuments, and a chamber in the Crypt was used to store some valuable treasures. In 1917 special measures were taken to deal with air raids, with the Cathedral to be a refuge during daylight.<sup>3</sup> When a fragment of a high explosive shell came through the roof of Bell Harry in January 1918, it was also decided to remove the stained glass windows.<sup>4</sup> Some other significant changes in the Precincts were unrelated to the war, most visibly the removal of seven of the large trees in the Green Court, “as they were in a dangerously decayed condition”.<sup>5</sup>

Canterbury was an important military centre and a base for the care of wounded soldiers. There was always the threat of attack and the visible presence of armed forces was a

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<sup>1</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1916, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> KSC Governors Minutes 1878-1926, pp. 285-310.

<sup>3</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1917, p. 469. Cf. Chapter Act Book 1910-19: 4 October 1917.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter Act Book 1910-19: on the gates: 9 October 1915, 29 January 1916, and 30 November 1918; on sandbags: 25 November 1915; on stained glass: 4 February, 16 February and 23 February 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter Act Book 1910-19: 23 June 1916. *The Cantuarian*, June 1916, p. 206. Cf. Patrick Collinson, Nigel Ramsay and Margaret Sparks (edd.), *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, pp. 305-6.

continuing reminder of the conflict.<sup>6</sup> Although troops had been billeted in the Mint Yard in the summer holidays of 1914, King's otherwise escaped the direct attentions of the military. Other local schools were not so lucky. The Duke of York's Royal Military School, which had moved to Dover in 1909, was taken over by the Army as a transit point and the school went to Hutton in Essex for the duration. Simon Langton Boys School lost its playing field and the South Eastern Mounted Brigade Army Service Corps occupied some of its buildings as well as using its playground for drill.<sup>7</sup> St. Augustine's College – neighbour and occasional sporting opponent – was a hospital in the summer of 1914 and taken over by the Women's Land Army as a training centre in 1917.

The last two years of the war were potentially the most dangerous in East Kent, as Zeppelin raids increased.<sup>8</sup> Two of the School's main sporting rivals were forced to leave because of the vulnerability of the Kent coast to air raids and possible naval bombardment. St Lawrence College, Ramsgate was evacuated in 1916 – the Upper School to Chester, the Junior School to Carmarthen – and Dover College moved to Leamington Spa after The Close was damaged during an air raid in August 1917.<sup>9</sup> Numbers at the Simon Langton Boys' School in Canterbury reached a record 285 in 1918 – in part, as the Headmaster explained, because “we have admitted several boys who have been driven from the coast by air-raids”.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps more immediately obvious to the boys were the changes in the Common Room. Schoolmasters of military age might volunteer or, later, be called up. Only one master, Harold Brown, had left to join the army in 1914, but the Headmaster decided to reduce the staff by two at the end of the Michaelmas Term, presumably in response to the fall in the numbers of boys. Francis Mirfield, who went to Eton, and Lawrence Bathurst, who went to Merchant Taylors', were given a term's pay in lieu of notice.<sup>11</sup> At the end of 1915 and early in 1916, there were more significant departures. The Derby Scheme did not regard teaching as a ‘starred’ occupation and four masters joined up: Herbert Poole, the housemaster of Holme House, Gilbert Purton, Rupert Everitt, and Charles Bell, the Lower Master. In addition, the French master Gaston de Chameroy, was “doing war work of a financial character in town” by 1916. Of these Brown and Everitt were to be killed, and none of the others returned to Canterbury.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Victor TC Smith and Peter Seary, ‘Kent’s Twentieth-Century Military and Civil Defences part 3 – Canterbury’ in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. CXXXII (2012), pp. 156-88; Dean Evans, ‘How far were the lines between Frontline and the Home Front blurred in East Kent (Canterbury) during the Great War 1914-1918?’

<sup>7</sup> *The Langtonian*, December 1914, p. 174-5.

<sup>8</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1917, p. 469; and, in less serious mode, *The Cantuarian*, March 1918, p. 557-8.

<sup>9</sup> Register of St Lawrence College 1879 to 1934 (1934) pp. viii-ix. For Dover College, see: <http://www.dovercollege.org.uk/about-us/history-of-dover-college/>

<sup>10</sup> *The Langtonian*, December 1918, p. 354.

<sup>11</sup> Governors Minutes, 11 December 1914; *The Cantuarian*, March 1915, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> See KSC rotulus and School Lists: Bell, Everitt and de Chameroy were listed as ‘absent on service’. Cf. Seldon and Walsh, p. 110: “The death rate of public school teachers was very high in the war”; and Barry Blades, *Roll of Honour*, p. 134: “By July 1918 some 23,000 British teachers, 42 per cent of the male workforce in schools, were serving in the armed forces”.

At King's, as elsewhere, the absence of such men had a detrimental effect on the staff.<sup>13</sup> Arthur Dean recalled: "Very soon there were no young masters left at school, their places being taken by elderly or retired men, with a few precluded by ill-health from enlisting." He went on to say: "Inevitably standards, both academic and athletic, fell, with this somewhat motley staff and decreasing numbers of boys." In some respects such a picture is misleading. Of the sixteen masters in the Michaelmas Term 1914, eight were still there in 1918.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand it is true that some 'elderly or retired men' did come to King's. One of the more remarkable was Charles Conybeare (aged 62), who had been MP for Camborne from 1885-95. He was on the staff for a short time, but did participate in a debate on the Compulsion Bill of 1916.<sup>15</sup> There was also considerable turnover in these replacements. Fourteen new masters joined between 1915 and 1918, but only one was still there in Michaelmas 1919. From the boys' point of view, they were indeed a motley crew. A memoir in the Archives, probably written by Charles Buckwell, at King's from 1918 to 1924, has a similar view of the masters at this time:

In September 1918, just before the conclusion of the war, the staff of Masters was, with three exceptions, deplorably inefficient; all sorts of queer creatures, whose academic distinctions were in some cases as shady as their morals, were in charge.<sup>16</sup>

There is one major exception to this relatively bleak picture. Ashley Gordon Lowndes, who had been at King's temporarily as a science teacher in the Michaelmas Term of 1913, returned in 1915, finally leaving in February 1918. For once the parting statement in *The Cantuarian* that "he has taken a very active part in the life of the School" seems to have been accurate. He was President of the Harvey Society, giving several talks for them (including two on explosives), and of the Photographic Society. A half blue himself he organised an open swimming competition and inter-tutor set swimming matches and even refereed the 1<sup>st</sup> XV. He gained a commission in the OTC, qualifying as a First Class Instructor in Musketry and the use of the Lewis Gun, and sang in penny readings and other entertainments. He left to join Nobel's Explosives Company, near Glasgow – "to undertake research work" – though an accident there seriously damaged his right arm. He was later a science master at Marlborough College (1921-38), where he taught JZ Young and Peter Medawar, and published articles in scientific journals, including *Nature*. His career as biologist and schoolteacher earned him a place in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Seldon and Walsh, pp. 104-5: "A rum lot indeed became teachers during the war." At Kent College, the first woman teacher was appointed in 1916 and soon most staff were female. Christopher Wright, *The Kent College Centenary Book*, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> See KSC rotulus 1914-18. Messrs Latter, Rosenberg, Reay, Goss, Lloyd Jones, Godfrey, Price and Heys remained throughout the war.

<sup>15</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1916, p. 171 stated that his work at King's was 'entirely war-work', without elaborating. For the debate, see *The Cantuarian*, March 1916, pp. 180-2.

<sup>16</sup> KSC Archives. Geoffrey Soden, who also arrived in September 1918, made a similar comment to David Edwards: "Some of the human flotsam and jetsam of the period were washed up on its shores." D.L. Edwards, *A History of the King's School Canterbury*, p. 165.

<sup>17</sup> See esp. *The Cantuarian*, March 1918, p. 578: "He has greatly developed the scientific side of the School and has introduced many improvements into the laboratories." Cf. H.V. Wyatt, 'Ashley Gordon Lowndes (1885-1956)' in *Oxford Dictionary of Biography*; and *Nature*, no. 3587, July 1938, p. 201.

The most significant wartime change to the staff was the departure of the Headmaster Charles McDowall in March 1916. In the 1957 history of the School, David Edwards suggested that “the slaughter of Etonians and O.K.S. in the trenches broke his spirit, and he was unfitted by temperament to rally the school as wartime difficulties increased. He was near a breakdown when he returned to parochial life, and then to his beloved Eton.”<sup>18</sup> There is no direct evidence for this view in the governors’ minutes or anywhere else. The school magazine merely noted that he was retiring “for private reasons” and published a full tribute as well as a report of the farewell presentation ceremony in the Schoolroom.<sup>19</sup> McDowall certainly retained links with the School, for example writing a report on the Bermondsey Club summer camp of August 1916 for *The Cantuarian*.<sup>20</sup> He also returned to the School on Speech Day 1918 and again in 1919 when he was the preacher, and for the unveiling of the War Memorial in 1921.

McDowall was replaced by Algernon Latter, an OKS who had been on the staff since 1897 and was Headmaster of the Junior School. They were very different personalities. The *Kentish Gazette* report – ‘New Headmaster of the King’s School, Canterbury’ – included a brief tribute to McDowall, referring to his “cultured charm of manner”, and a photograph of Latter in military uniform.<sup>21</sup> As Captain Latter of the OTC he had taken command of the School contingent in December 1915. He was also, as was pointed out on Speech Day, the first lay Headmaster since the late seventeenth century. He was a deeply loyal OKS and proud of the fact that he had attended his first Speech Day as a ‘parrot’ some 36 years before and “had not missed a Speech Day since”.<sup>22</sup> Whatever his limitations, and they were many, he seemed an appropriate figurehead in the special circumstances of war.

Arthur Dean was right about the ‘decreasing numbers of boys’. In the Trinity (Summer) term of 1914 there had been 148 boys in the senior school. The immediate effect of the war was a sharp drop to 131 in September. There was a further decline to 118 in the Hilary [Lent] Term of 1915. In the school year 1915-16 numbers were fairly stable, but fell further in 1916-17, before recovering in 1917-18 and reaching 139, the highest since 1914, in the Michaelmas Term of 1918. The departure of Herbert Poole at the end of 1915 led to the closure of Holme House, with the boys moving to Langley House and School House. The Junior School by contrast was remarkably stable in 1914, 1915 and 1916 and then increased in the last two years of the War.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> D.L. Edwards, *A History of the King’s School Canterbury*, pp. 156-7. Thomas Hinde, *Imps of Promise*, p. 85 repeats this story. Several headmasters did suffer breakdowns: see Seldon and Walsh, pp. 121-3.

<sup>19</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1916, p. 153 and June 1916, pp. 190-2. Correspondence in the School Archives with McDowall’s son suggests that other issues were responsible for his departure. KSC Archives box H 4.

<sup>20</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1916, pp. 315-7.

<sup>21</sup> This *Kentish Gazette* report noted that McDowall had resigned ‘for private reasons’. It also referred to his ‘cultured charm of manner’. K.G. 5.2.1916.

<sup>22</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1916, p. 291. Cf. K.G. 5.8.1916.

<sup>23</sup> See rotulus 1914-18 and *The Cantuarian*, December 1915, p. 142. The Little Upper Dormitory in School House was re-opened in the Michaelmas Term 1918. *The Cantuarian*, December 1918, p. 700.

Term	Senior School	Junior School	Total
1914 Hilary	147	45	192
Trinity	148	48	196
Michaelmas	131	49	180
1915 Hilary	118	48	166
Trinity	122	40	162
Michaelmas	128	48	176
1916 Hilary	127	47	174
Trinity	123	48	171
Michaelmas	112	48	160
1917 Hilary	114	52	166
Trinity	112	62	174
Michaelmas	120	65	186
1918 Hilary	129	60	189
Trinity	126	61	187
Michaelmas	139	57	196

The effect of a smaller school and of the absence of the 19 year olds who had provided leadership is not easy to assess. *The Cantuarian* editorial in July 1915 sought to derive a positive lesson from this: “with the decrease in numbers of a school more work is required from each individual” and added “we have to produce our Elevens and Fours in exactly the same way as before”.<sup>24</sup> Arthur Dean was more sceptical in his reflections. “Winning of prizes and ‘colours’ became less competitive and prestigious. I gained a number of both and was Head of the School and Captain of the cricket XI, but I often wonder how I should have fared but for the War.”<sup>25</sup> The Headmaster made the same point – perhaps a little tactlessly? – on Speech Day 1915: “the older boys had left before their time; the result being the weakening of such bodies as the Sixth Form, the Eleven and the Fifteen.”<sup>26</sup> Reflecting on this after the war, Latter put a more upbeat interpretation on the fall in age of boys: “during the war, the average age of the school dropped considerably, so that positions of authority and responsibility fell upon the shoulders of very much younger boys than was usual. However they had stepped into their places fully aware of their responsibilities, and had never at any time caused him anxiety.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1915 no. 2, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Dean, *Recollections of Two World Wars*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1915, p. 93. Cf. K.G. 31.7.1915.

<sup>27</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1920, p. 58.

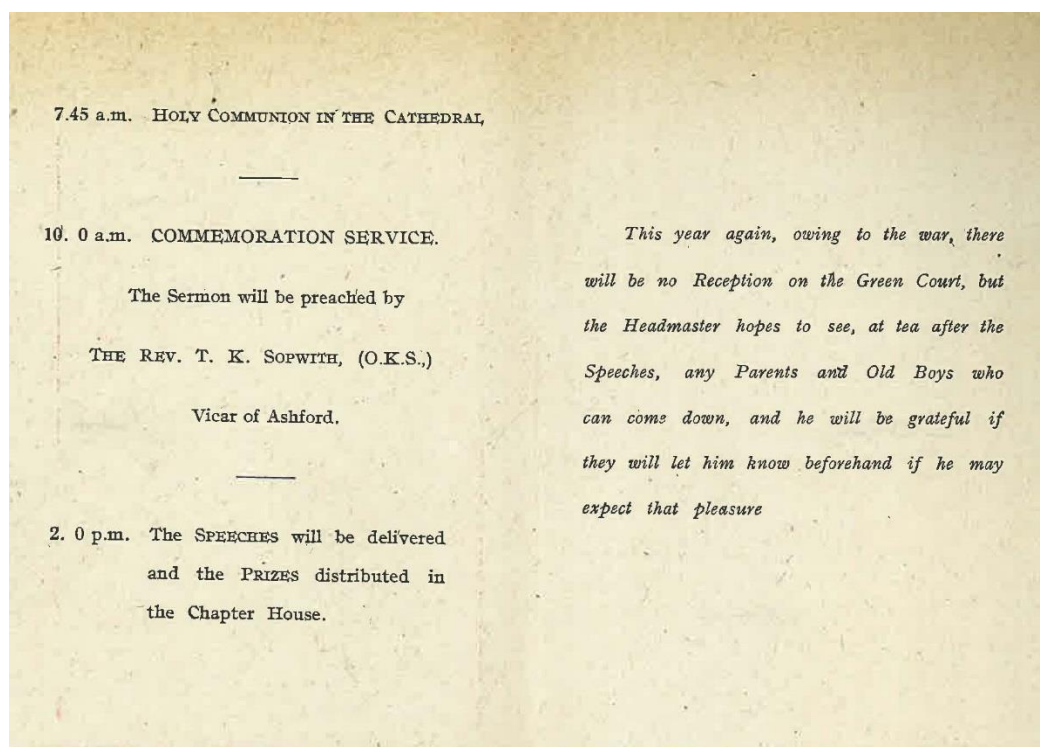


Arthur Dean, Rugby XV 1917

It was the senior boys whose academic priorities were most directly affected by the war. For the majority lessons carried on as before. The syllabus did not change – though there was the occasional nod to the wider world such as setting WE Henley’s ‘The Last Post’ for the Latin Verse Prize in 1918. For the Sixth Form, however, things were in practice very different. Few boys expected to go directly to university. Of the 1916 leavers, three won awards to Oxford and one to Cambridge, but all in the event went into the services. One, Ralph Mead, was killed, but the others only took up their university places after the War. At the same time eight boys were recorded as gaining entry to military academies, and a further fourteen in 1917 and seven in 1918. There were no university awards in 1917 and when Arthur Dean gained a Ford Studentship at Trinity College, Oxford in 1918, he spent some time training with the Officer Cadet Battalion before finally going up in 1919. In the Speech

Day programme's list of 'academical and other distinctions' the military colleges – Woolwich, Sandhurst, Quetta, Osborne, etc. – increasingly dominated.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that prizes were awarded in the form of War Savings Certificates and that the school examinations in the summer of 1917 were less elaborate than usual was another indication of the new priorities.<sup>29</sup> Arthur Dean, who won numerous prizes in both 1917 and 1918, was not impressed. "Prizes degenerated from handsomely bound volumes with the school crest to War Savings Certificates, long since gone with the wind."<sup>30</sup> (Several of the prize books – duly bound and crested – of his uncle John Dean, at the School from 1869 to 1876, are in the School Archives.)



Invitation to Speech Day 1917

Speech Day itself was adjusted to balance the customary jollity with the seriousness of the wider context, as well as to save on expense. There was no reception on the Green Court after the Speeches and Prize Giving and in 1917, the *Kentish Gazette* reported: "We are requested to state that, during the war, no invitations are being sent, but that all friends of the School will be very welcome."<sup>31</sup> The Speeches themselves saw some modifications. In 1915 there seems to have been a deliberate decision to give them a patriotic – even bellicose –

<sup>28</sup> The Cantuarian, November 1915, p. 99; November 1916, p. 299; November 1917, p. 494; December 1918, p. 684.

<sup>29</sup> K.G. 4.8.1917 and The Cantuarian, November 1917, pp. 488-9.

<sup>30</sup> Arthur Dean, *Recollections of Two World Wars*, p. 1. In 1917, Dean Wace took the opportunity to refer to newspaper comments on the usefulness of Deans, and added "He was happy to see that there was one Dean in that School who had publicly vindicated their importance." K.G. 4.8.1917. The Simon Langton Girls' School also gave certificates, but the Boys' School continued with books.

<sup>31</sup> K.G. 14.7.1917. K.G. 3.7.1915. At Kent College, Old Boys' Day and Prize Days were cancelled; see Christopher Wright, *The Kent College Centenary Book*, p. 44.

flavour. The performances opened with “a singularly apt and impressive passage” from Demosthenes: ‘An urgent appeal to the Athenians to prosecute the war vigorously’. They also included ‘Before Harfleur’ from Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, which was “full of spirit”, while the Virgil on ‘The Praises of Italy’ was, as *The Cantuarian* acknowledged, “of a more subtle appeal”. This was a more serious programme than usual, but “the abolition of much of the comic element did not seem to depreciate the speeches in any way in the eyes of the School...” opined the magazine.<sup>32</sup>

For the rest of the war, by contrast, Speeches seem to have largely avoided reference to the conflict. Thus in 1916 Aristophanes, Molière, and the rude mechanicals from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* brought a return to the more traditional and comic. In 1917 “the Speeches this year were cut very short, on account of the difficulties, which were involved in the general disturbance caused by the work on the land”.<sup>33</sup> And in 1918 Speeches were again cut short, but the Aristophanes extract from *The Acharnians* (“a Boeotian trader comes to Athens, which is severely rationed owing to the war...”) might seem to be of topical relevance to set beside a familiarly amusing scene from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.<sup>34</sup>

Games carried on more or less as normal, at least internally. “Though handicapped in many ways owing to the war, besides other considerations, the Sports which were held this year on Blore’s Piece on March 26th and 27th were, we consider, remarkable successful.”<sup>35</sup> There was no Sports Day in 1916, but it returned in 1917 and 1918, also at Blore’s. There was even a tug of war in 1917 in response to a suggestion in *The Cantuarian*.<sup>36</sup> The claim that “the substitution of certificates for the usual prizes seemed to have no visible effect upon the enthusiasm of the competitors” is impossible to verify.<sup>37</sup>

Tutor set rugby matches also continued, subject only to interruption from the weather, especially in 1917.<sup>38</sup> Tennis survived as a social game, with the occasional competition.<sup>39</sup> Fives had matches against St Edmund’s and St Augustine’s, though as a correspondent in *The Cantuarian* pointed out the sport declined in popularity – not least because of the darkness of the courts (by implication because of the blackout).<sup>40</sup> Conversely, swimming flourished through the energy of Ashley Lowndes – there was even an inter-dormitory race (between the Grange and Wing dormitories).<sup>41</sup> Paperchases were popular. There was a half holiday and a paperchase to celebrate Latter’s appointment as Headmaster in February 1915 and another “in honour of the recent distinctions won by OKS” in January 1917.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1915, pp. 92-3.

<sup>33</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1917, p. 487.

<sup>34</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1918, p. 676.

<sup>35</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1915, p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1917, p. 402 and June 1917, pp. 419-20, and June 1918, pp. 608-9.

<sup>37</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1915, p. 44. This continued until at least 1919: ‘Cards again took the place of Cups, we hope for the last time, but this in no way detracted from the competitive spirit.’ *The Cantuarian*, July 1919, p. 741. Cf. November 1919, p. 16

<sup>38</sup> E.g. *The Cantuarian*, March 1915, pp. 15-16; March 1916, pp. 168-9; March 1917, pp. 376-7 and March 1918, pp. 568-9.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. *The Cantuarian*, November 1916, p. 322 and November 1917, p. 513.

<sup>40</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1919, p. 732.

<sup>41</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1917, p. 470.

<sup>42</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1915, p. 171; March 1917, p. 386.

The disruption to sport and the impact of the military presence in Canterbury were most obvious in the fixture lists for school teams. County cricket and most club cricket (at least in the Canterbury area) came to an end, but school matches continued on the St. Lawrence ground: “though the pavilion is denied to us, the game is occasionally interrupted by the blast of a bugle or the shout of a sergeant-major”.<sup>43</sup> The 1915 season was disrupted by German measles, but there were two games against the 49<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, who even brought a band to the first encounter. Opponents in 1916 still included Eastbourne, Felsted and Highgate, but six of the thirteen matches were now against military sides. A year later the distant school fixtures disappeared and military opposition now dominated with ten of the fifteen matches in 1917, when only Dover College and St Edmund’s survived as school opponents, and nine of the eleven in 1918, when the only school played was St Edmund’s.<sup>44</sup>

Something similar happened with rugby football: in 1914-15 six of the ten matches were against military opposition and four out of seven in 1915-16. By 1916-17, traditional opponents Eastbourne, Merchant Taylors’ and Dover, as well as Sutton Valence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV, survived of the school matches, and five out of ten were against the military, but in 1917-18 it was eight out of ten, and the only school opposition was Sutton Valence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV. In the Michaelmas term of 1918 all nine matches were against military sides, with Duke of York’s School, recently returned from their exile, played in January 1919. It took some time for things to return to normal and Merchant Taylors’ only reappeared on the fixture list in 1928.<sup>45</sup>

The rowing fixture against Tonbridge continued throughout the war, except in 1915, when German measles forced a cancellation. Otherwise it was very difficult to arrange any matches on the river and the regatta season was abandoned.<sup>46</sup> More serious problems were exposed in ‘An Appeal from the Boat Club’ published in 1920: “During the war, as was natural, repairs were reduced to a minimum, with the result that during the last year an unusual amount had to be done in the way of overhauling boats, minor repairs, and renovating the raft.” The club had very little financial support and the boat house at Fordwich was in a disintegrated condition.<sup>47</sup>

Results for most teams were predictably disappointing. As the ‘Football Retrospective 1914-15’ lamented: “Owing to the number of fellows who left at the beginning or during the course of the season to go and play “the greater game,” the football of the School has of course been rather upset and it is difficult to review the results in the ordinary way.”<sup>48</sup> The XV won 4, lost 5 and drew 1. Thereafter one match was won in 1915-16, three in 1916-17 (“the military teams proved too heavy for us”) and two in 1918-19. Only 1917-18 with eight

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<sup>43</sup> The Cantuarian, July 1915 no. 2, p. 41.

<sup>44</sup> The Cantuarian, November 1915, p. 102; November 1916, p. 300; November 1917, p. 495; and November 1918, p. 639.

<sup>45</sup> See The Cantuarian, November 1919, p. 29 and March 1921, p. 133.

<sup>46</sup> See e.g. The Cantuarian, August 1916, p. 253.

<sup>47</sup> The Cantuarian, November 1920, p. 112. Cf. Michael Dover, A History of Rowing at the King’s School Canterbury Part 1: 1862-1972, pp. 52-7.

<sup>48</sup> The Cantuarian, March 1915, p. 13.

victories could be regarded as a success. The cricket teams did only slightly better, winning 16, drawing 9 and losing 20 matches.<sup>49</sup>

Outside the classroom the intellectual and cultural aspects of the school continued largely unaffected by the War, although it was announced in December 1914 “that the School Concert and the House Supper shall not take place this term” and they were not revived until 1919.<sup>50</sup> *The Cantuarian* provided a full review of “a most delightful Entertainment” in November 1916 from Mr Foxton Ferguson (a master at Eton during the War) and Miss Beatrice Spencer – both members of the popular Folk-Song Quartet. Percy Godfrey was responsible for organising the selection of Gilbert and Sullivan excerpts in December 1916 and the evening of “songs, character sketches and dances” in December 1917, while Miss Skipwith’s musical evenings (also “delightful”) took place on Sunday evenings in the Michaelmas terms of 1916 and 1917. More informally there were several Rag Concerts and Penny Readings, as well as an impromptu ‘Sing-Song’.<sup>51</sup>

School societies carried on very much as normal, with two notable additions. The Photographic Society was founded in June 1915 and had 24 members.<sup>52</sup> Photography had long been a popular hobby and there was already a dark room in the Mint Yard. More significant, and an interesting development in wartime, was the foundation of the Marlowe Society in February 1916. “The object of the society is Literary and Dramatic” and part of the aim was to honour “the most famous” OKS.<sup>53</sup> This was one of the last achievements of Headmaster Charles McDowall, who was the Society’s first President – it is hard to imagine this happening under Latter. A long article on Marlowe duly appeared in the August 1916 *Cantuarian*.<sup>54</sup> Indeed the amount of space in the school magazine devoted to such matters is itself notable. The March 1917 issue had over seven pages on the Harvey Society (the subjects were: ‘Lyddite’, ‘South Africa’, ‘Worms and their Work’ and ‘Some Features of the Life of a Modern Industrial City’ [Leeds]) and the Marlowe Society (‘Jane Austen’, ‘FWH Myers’ and ‘Charles Lamb’).<sup>55</sup>

It seemed likely that the War would have a major effect on the OTC. The senior boys recognised the distinct possibility that they would soon embark on military training for real, though from 1916 they were no longer able to gain a commission directly from school. Attitudes are not easy to document however, not least as recording of the activities of the Corps was patchy in these years. Alongside comments that “the Corps flourishes yet more than ever”, there is evidence to suggest that, as had been the case before the war, enthusiasm for the OTC was limited.

In November 1915 *The Cantuarian* reported that there were regular signalling and musketry classes – and that “a trench is in process of being constructed on Blore’s Piece”. It

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<sup>49</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1931, p. 424 for a summary of school fixtures and results.

<sup>50</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1914, p. 769; March 1920, p. 59.

<sup>51</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1916, p. 351, March 1917, p. 385, December 1917, p. 535 and March 1918, p. 581. Also *The Cantuarian*, December 1915, pp. 145-6; March 1916, p. 185; December 1916, p. 353; June 1917, p. 434; December 1917, p. 537 and June 1918, p. 622.

<sup>52</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1915 no. 2, p. 53.

<sup>53</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1916, pp. 182-4. A Literary Society had been formed in 1910 “for the reading of dramatic literature”, but it did not last. See *The Cantuarian*, April 1910, p. 546.

<sup>54</sup> *The Cantuarian*, August 1916, pp. 253-6.

<sup>55</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1917, pp. 392-9.

went on to note: “Rumours of practice in hand-grenade throwing and other similar delights were current at the beginning of term, but have not yet substantialized; we hope something will come of them.”<sup>56</sup> Nothing more was heard of the trench but it clearly did not interfere with matches on Blore’s. A Platoon Cup Competition, suggested in several letters to *The Cantuarian* as an improvement on the Section Cup, was inaugurated in March 1916 and a Challenge Cup for shooting, presented by a parent, in July 1916.<sup>57</sup> There was even a band, which made its first public appearance on Empire Day in 1916.<sup>58</sup> In 1917 a consignment of 50 rifles meant that there were “now enough to arm the entire Company”, but it is difficult to know what to make of the reference to the bayonet-fighting class being replaced by boxing.<sup>59</sup>

One curiosity is that the School did not attend any OTC Camps during the war. In 1915 this may well have been because of the outbreak of German measles. As the anonymous writer of the poem ‘K.S.O.T.C.’ put it: “all the Corps excepting four were struck with the German measles”. In 1916 there was a clash with Speech Day and hopes were again dashed in 1917.<sup>60</sup> It was not until 1920 that camps were resumed. Full reports did appear in *The Cantuarian* on the Field Days held with – or rather ‘against’ – St Edmund’s. The conclusion on the 1917 encounter was revealing: “though only on a small scale, these manoeuvres were a decidedly pleasant change from the ordinary routine of parades, and showed everybody that to discuss things in a lecture room, and even to practise them on the parade ground, are not the same thing as to carry them out under fire even though only from blank cartridge.”<sup>61</sup>

The comment of *The Cantuarian* on the arrival of Captain Aley from the Royal Fusiliers in the summer of 1918 that “with all these extra encouragements and interests the keenness of the School in all things appertaining to OTC work should increase yet further” is revealing in its ambiguity.<sup>62</sup> Indeed the frequency of the references to increasing keenness gives the impression that however much the boys – and especially the most senior – recognised the necessity of the OTC, there was in fact not a great deal of enthusiasm about it.

As often the correspondence pages of *The Cantuarian* provide a critical perspective – usually from those who valued the importance of the Corps. In July 1915 a long letter from, appropriately, ‘Enthusiasm’ suggested that there were shortcomings in the existing arrangements and in the School’s priorities:

I believe there is a Commission Class, but it never seems to go out. It is, I understand, because Cricket and Rowing allow no time for it, as they are apparently considered more important. But is it right that we should put our games before our military training, while our comrades are being butchered in

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<sup>56</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1915, p. 115.

<sup>57</sup> On the platoon cup, see *The Cantuarian*, December 1914, p. 782; July 1915 no. 3, p. 81; December 1915, p. 151; and March 1916, p. 172. On the shooting cup, see *The Cantuarian*, June 1916, p. 207 and August 1916, p. 256.

<sup>58</sup> *The Cantuarian*, June 1916, p. 207.

<sup>59</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1917, pp. 383-4.

<sup>60</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1915 no. 3, p. 78 for the poem and p. 61 for the wider impact of the measles; November 1916, p. 277 and July 1917, p. 470.

<sup>61</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1916, pp. 353-4 and December 1917, pp. 532-3.

<sup>62</sup> *The Cantuarian*, June 1918, p. 619.

Flanders, and when at any time now we may be called out by conscription? I think there must be very few who think it is.<sup>63</sup>

He went on to suggest “a scheme by which members of the Commission Class could be given adequate training”. The editorial in the next issue noted, perhaps in response or to placate the relevant members of staff, that “the Commission Class has been out several times, thanks to the energy of our officers”.<sup>64</sup> In the issue after that, a letter from ‘No. 2 Platoon’ proposed a platoon competition as “an opportunity for arousing keenness in the members of the O.T.C.”<sup>65</sup> In December 1916 it was the turn of ‘Cadet’ to comment on field days: “surely for the sake of the training of the O.T.C. we should have more of them, especially in time of war. May I suggest that we should devote one whole day each term to a field-day?”<sup>66</sup>

No school could escape the vicissitudes of the national economy, and wartime shortages and inflation had a potentially serious effect. In December 1914 the Governors considered an increase in boarding fees “while prices are higher” and in February 1915 gave the Headmaster permission to charge “an additional Boarding Fee of £1 per year”.<sup>67</sup> In July, the Governors went further, allowing the Headmaster to charge the maximum boarding fee of £63.<sup>68</sup> A month before the war ended, a letter to parents asked them to pay ‘a temporary additional fee’ for boarders of £2 2s 0d per term for food and furniture.<sup>69</sup>

Schoolboys have always complained about food, but in wartime the concerns were very real. Arthur Dean had been a dayboy, but became a boarder in School House when he was appointed Captain of School in 1917. In his memoirs he provided some detail:

Food for boarders, never luxurious, deteriorated during the War, with the general shortage caused by the German submarine campaign. Our basic fare was ‘taws’, as we called the thick slices of bread and margarine which were the basis of our breakfast and tea. We had a solid lunch but nothing after tea except what we provided for ourselves. There was a good tuck-shop, where a large roll and butter and cup of tea cost three-pence. Later on an unpalatable maize bread was substituted for wheat bread. This led to mutinous rumblings and as Head of the school I was told by the headmaster (‘Algy’ Latter) in no uncertain terms that I must put a stop to this by explaining the national emergency.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> The Cantuarian, July 1915 no. 2, pp. 57-8.

<sup>64</sup> The Cantuarian, July 1915 no. 3, pp. 61-2.

<sup>65</sup> The Cantuarian, July 1915 no. 3, p. 81.

<sup>66</sup> The Cantuarian, December 1916, p. 362.

<sup>67</sup> KSC Governors Minutes 11.12.14 and 20.2.15.

<sup>68</sup> KSC Governors Minutes 31.7.15.

<sup>69</sup> KSC Archives Scrapbook 1, p. 53. The letter was dated 10 October 1918.

<sup>70</sup> Arthur Dean, Recollections of Two World Wars, p. 2. Cf. Seldon and Walsh, pp. 101-2.

KING'S SCHOOL,

CANTERBURY,

10.10.18.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Owing to the vastly increased and still increasing cost of living at the present time, I am asking all parents of Boarders at this School if they are willing to help Housemasters (whose anxieties and responsibilities are very heavy nowadays), through this difficult period by paying a temporary additional Fee of £2 2s. 0d per Term. This proposal is made, firstly, in order that full nourishing diet may continue to be given to the boys, and secondly, because, as you well know, it is not only in matters of actual food that prices are so enhanced, but also in all the articles of household furniture, etc., etc., which, in a house full of boys, need frequent replacement.

I make this request with the full sympathy and consent of the Governing Body. If, as I hope, you will consider it a fair and reasonable one, I shall be very grateful if you will forward to your boy's Housemaster a cheque for the above amount, and allow it to be charged, for the present, on future terminal accounts.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

ALGERNON LATTE.

The Headmaster's request for "a temporary additional Fee"

What Dean calls 'taws' is described as 'towse' in *The Cantuarian* in June 1916:

This term is to see the revival of "towse" in place of the usual loaves as a further war economy. For the benefit of the uninitiated "towse" is bread and butter, cut and spread. The word is one of the School mysteries and it is useless to try to derive it.<sup>71</sup>

Even worse perhaps for the hungry schoolboy, the tuck shop's opening hours were restricted in the summer of 1917 – "for purposes of economy".<sup>72</sup> And as an aside, 'Play the game'

<sup>71</sup> The Cantuarian, June 1916, p. 206.

<sup>72</sup> The Cantuarian, June 1917, p. 432; cf. p. 405 on "a sheet of paper pinned to the closed door of our once ever open Tuck Shop, stating the hours (few and far between) at which the shop will open."

noted in a letter to the school magazine in the Michaelmas term 1918 that “though you may not believe it, food is scarce; at least the Tuck-shop seems to have very little to sell.”<sup>73</sup>

Latter sought to reassure parents at Speech Day in 1917:

In accordance with Lord Davenport’s request to schools, they had made an honest effort to conform as far as possible, with the food regulations. He did not think, however, that they should stint growing boys, who required a good deal of feeding. They were very hungry mortals and they had done their best to satisfy those cravings where they could. (Laughter)<sup>74</sup>

The boys did not see the funny side. Christopher Worsfold, who joined the Junior School in 1916, recalled:

I well remember a typical midday meal, the principal one of the day. It consisted of half a meat pie and an exiguous green salad and, I think, a piece of bread. This was followed by plain steamed rice and a dollop of molasses or perhaps black treacle. This was, I remember, known to us as ‘Bugs and varnish’. Potatoes were very scarce, and we hardly ever saw them. Sometimes our spirits rose, only to find the mashed potato, as it looked at first glance, was in fact parsnips or turnips.<sup>75</sup>

Evidence of other hardships is not so easy to find. It might have been thought that heating was a problem. A letter in *The Cantuarian* refers to “the heating apparatus just inside the house door” but the complaint was that boys were injuring themselves on it.<sup>76</sup> As to lighting, things actually improved in the summer of 1916: “On coming back this term, the School was agreeably surprised to find that electric light had been installed all over the School, except for the dormitories.”<sup>77</sup> Only towards the end of the war in July 1918 did paper shortages lead to *The Cantuarian* reducing its content and its font size as an economy measure.<sup>78</sup> Soon after, a letter in the magazine from ‘C.O. Lour’ exposed the ineffectiveness of another measure:

Some two years ago, the Sports Committee decided that as a War Economy certain restrictions should be put on the buying of colours, Caps, Sweaters, etc. This rule has been ignored by most people, who have bought their colours by sending home for the money. Might I suggest that this is a fitting moment that these restrictions should be removed?<sup>79</sup>

There were various ways in which the boys could feel that they were contributing more or less directly to the war effort. One simple opportunity was through the collections at School services. Belgian Relief was chosen at the start of the Michaelmas Term in 1914, but the main charity supported during the war was the Public Schools Base Hospital. From January 1915 this was normally the first collection of the term and there were thirteen in all. (Some of the money raised by farm work also went to the Hospital.) Other war-related

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<sup>73</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1918, p. 706.

<sup>74</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1917, p. 488 and K.G. 4.8.1917.

<sup>75</sup> Christopher Worsfold, *Reminiscences*, written c1978. KSC Archives box A 79.

<sup>76</sup> *The Cantuarian*, June 1916, p. 222.

<sup>77</sup> *The Cantuarian*, June 1916, p. 206.

<sup>78</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1918, p. 633.

<sup>79</sup> *The Cantuarian*, December 1918, p. 706.

charities supported were the British Red Cross, Kentish Prisoners Fund, Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital, St Dunstan's Society (for soldiers and sailors blinded in the War), Church Army huts and the Canterbury and District War Work Depot. Support for other charities continued, notably the YMCA, RNLI, CMS, NSPCC, the Missions to Seamen and of course the Canterbury Club in Bermondsey.<sup>80</sup> There was even a scheme for holiday work in aid of the Church abroad: some of the jobs done were war-related, but most were not.<sup>81</sup>

In the Michaelmas Term 1915, the School spent two days helping with the completion of registration forms relating, presumably, to the Derby Scheme. "About 1500 names were copied in the two days at our disposal, and we now know all there is to be known about ledger sheets, pink forms, pink and white cards, &c."<sup>82</sup> Another favoured practice was the purchase of war savings bonds. In response to a talk in June 1916, a War Savings Association was formed at the School "with great enthusiasm". The purchase of the 200<sup>th</sup> certificate was celebrated by a half holiday on 11 March 1918.<sup>83</sup> In the autumn of 1917, the boys were involved in the collection of horse chestnuts – "for the purposes of munitions" – alongside other schools in Canterbury and across the country.<sup>84</sup> However there seems to be no record of any response to the letter on the 'National Egg Collection for the Wounded' in July 1915.<sup>85</sup>

As at many schools, King's boys did their bit by working on the land. In the summer holidays of 1915 "several members of the School voluntarily assisted farmers to gather in their crops and were paid good wages as farm labourers, whilst others turned hop-pickers and made themselves generally useful."<sup>86</sup> The following summer some work was done during term time.

On Tuesday July 11th, a party of twenty-eight boys volunteered for war work in the form of hop stripping, on Mr Whiteman's farm situated at the foot of Tyler Hill. The party arrived soon after lunch and worked all the afternoon, refreshment being provided for them; they returned in time for tea at the School, hot and dirty, but glad to be able to say that they had done something.<sup>87</sup>

In 1917 the Cathedral Chapter discussed a proposal that the Bowling Green (now the Memorial Garden) should be used 'for the cultivation of vegetables' and a letter to *The Cantuarian* suggested that "we should rent a field from someone and get permission to cultivate it entirely by ourselves", but neither idea was taken any further.<sup>88</sup> Instead boys continued to work for local farmers over the next two summers:

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<sup>80</sup> KSC Archives: Preachers Book, Vol. 1 (1910-31).

<sup>81</sup> *The Cantuarian*, March 1918, pp. 586-7.

<sup>82</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1915, p. 114.

<sup>83</sup> *The Cantuarian*, August 1916, p. 257; March 1918, pp. 579 and 581. Cf. Blades, Roll of Honour, p. 65-7.

<sup>84</sup> K.G. 10.11.1917. The horse chestnuts were a source of acetone, used in the production of cordite.

Schoolchildren across the country were enlisted by the Ministry of Munitions in their collection. Cf. Blades, Roll of Honour, pp. 64-5.

<sup>85</sup> *The Cantuarian*, July 1915 no. 3, p. 79. Cf. Blades, Roll of Honour, p. 63.

<sup>86</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1915, p. 114.

<sup>87</sup> *The Cantuarian*, August 1916 p. 258. Boys from St Edmund's School also worked on Whiteman's farm. See Jock Asbury-Bailey, *Foundation on a Hill*, pp. 50-1.

<sup>88</sup> CAB, 3 March 1917; *The Cantuarian*, December 1917, p. 554: the editors rejected the idea as "totally impracticable". Simon Langton boys had allotments on Mount's land; see *The Langtonian*, April 1917, p. 141 and WT 28.7.1917.

As during last Summer Term, a small gang of labourers may be seen leaving the Mint yard each morning at 8.30am. Mr Whiteman has been kind enough to accept our services again, so that we think we may congratulate ourselves on having done some really useful work on his property last year.<sup>89</sup>



Hop picking at Blean in 1916 (Photograph from John Heming)

As this involved the boys “working in squads, for a fortnight at a time”, the Headmaster admitted in 1917 that “this agricultural work had naturally interfered to some little extent with the ordinary school work, and for that reason they had not had such elaborate examinations as they usually had in the summer” and it also reduced the time available for rehearsals for the Speech Day speeches.<sup>90</sup> This was a clear indication of war-time exigencies taking priority over the normal school activities. As one farmer put it in a letter to the School: “I feel sure the public spirit which moved their parents to allow this break in their studies will prove a real benefit to the country”.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The Cantuarian, June 1918, p. 620. Cf. The Cantuarian, November 1917, pp. 488 and 512, and November 1918, p. 678.

<sup>90</sup> K.G. 4.8.1917. Cf. The Cantuarian, November 1917, pp. 487-8.

<sup>91</sup> K.G. 4.8.1917.

In the summer holiday of 1917 a Harvest Camp was organised by George Rosenberg at Rushall, near Pewsey in Wiltshire. The Headmaster, three masters and thirty boys in shifts of at least three weeks each had to cope with a notoriously wet summer. They began by “hooking nettles and weeds in a pouring rain, from the overgrown droves and rickyards”, before they began harvesting. Pay started at 4d an hour rising to 6d, with an 8 hour day at the height of the harvest.

The work was hard and the conditions often unpleasant, but however wet and tired we were, we could always look forward to a hot bath, comfortable quarters and a good meal when we got back at the end of the day... Casualties were few, colds and other ailments practically unknown, and I do not think anyone regretted his bit of war-work.<sup>92</sup>



Dinner break at the harvest camp 1917 (Photograph from John Heming)

In 1918 the boys returned to Wiltshire and a more precise record of their work was kept.

The camp lasted for seven weeks from the beginning of the holidays to the end of the harvest. The health was good, two mild cases of influenza breaking the monotony. At the start, the weather was very different from last year. The party was able to get to work on the harvest right from the start, and there was practically no interruption right to the end. In all the seven weeks, only one day,

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<sup>92</sup> The Cantuarian, June 1917, p. 470; November 1917, pp. 506-8. It is not clear if this was part of the national agricultural camp scheme, organised by the Cavendish Association and the government. See Blades, Roll of Honour, pp. 100-1.

near the end, was blank, while on five others, was the work more or less seriously interfered with. The total number of workers was forty-three, including the Headmaster, four other masters and Capt. Aley.

Last year, our rate of pay began at fourpence an hour, increasing to sixpence after three weeks. This year we started at sixpence, while stacking and carting was paid at eightpence, a few younger boys being reckoned at fourpence an hour. As the stackers were divided up among the different sets on the farm, it meant a ten-hour day for most of them, starting at seven after an early breakfast. A number of boys were therefore earning the respectable wage of two pounds a week. As the party contained so many veterans from the year before, the experience enabled us to get through an increased amount of work far greater than the increase in numbers would account for. The actual number of hours worked amounted to 6100½. Of these, 1673½ were spent in stacking and carting. The balance was devoted to setting up, pooking hay and barley, winnowing, spreading manure, carrying sacks of corn, carting hay, sheepminding and docking. A careful record was kept of the number of acres set up. It came to the very respectable total of 1129.<sup>93</sup>

As to the wider impact of the War on the School, the most thoughtful and reflective responses came in Cantuarian editorials. There were two issues of the magazine in July 1915. In the first, the writer noted “the change for the better which has taken place in our school spirit since the beginning of the war”. He went on in realistic fashion about the degree to which schoolboys heeded the homilies of their seniors:

It is no doubt easy to moralise, and we have been told over and over again what are the duties of those who remain in safety at home, so that the advice is apt to fall on deaf ears. Hence it is all the more vital that we should pull ourselves together, and realise that a serious task for the nation should mean a serious task for the School.<sup>94</sup>

In the second issue, he wrote: “we cannot expect everything to run as smoothly as usual, and we should therefore be prepared to put up with inconveniences with as much cheerfulness as possible; the absence of this cheerfulness would only make things harder for others.”<sup>95</sup> In June 1917 the editorial again struggled to come to terms with the effect of the War on the School:

In short, to all outward semblance, the School still goes on in the same old way, but in reality we are gradually gliding into a more earnest and more useful way, new tasks, and fresh responsibilities, while some of us are gone beyond the reach of earthly responsibility.<sup>96</sup>

This ambivalence about school life in time of war is most apparent in November 1916. Having commented on the many deaths of OKS in battle, the editorial continued: However, although all that we can do at School seems of but small practical value compared with the deeds of which we read every day, it is of the utmost importance that all alike should ‘carry on’ to the best of their ability. It must be

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<sup>93</sup> The Cantuarian, December 1918, pp. 694-6.

<sup>94</sup> The Cantuarian, July 1915 no. 2, pp. 29-30.

<sup>95</sup> The Cantuarian, July 1915 no. 3, p. 61.

<sup>96</sup> The Cantuarian, June 1917, p. 406.

remembered that this is a time of stress for schools as well as for nations, and that our utmost efforts will be needful if we are to uphold the traditions of the place in a manner worthy of our predecessors. It is as true today as ever it has been in the past that “they also serve, who only stand and wait”, though to some indeed such service seems harder to perform cheerfully than the more strenuous and dangerous tasks which fall to the lot of those who are fighting and dying for their country in the trenches of the Somme or the deserts of Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, we must work hard, and play hard, remembering that every success, whether won on the football-field or in the examination room, is a step in the right direction. If we do all we can to keep alive the spirit of the School, that vital *esprit-de-corps*, which is the very essence of school-life, when our turn comes to leave and offer our services to our country, we may content ourselves with the thought that our school days have been of some use, and not entirely a time of selfish pleasure.<sup>97</sup>

By contrast, the letters published in *The Cantuarian* may give a better impression of the day-to-day concerns of the boys. After the initial issues in November and December 1914, war problems were very largely absent. Instead there were more or less serious complaints and comments from the pseudonymous correspondents about more parochial matters. “Far be it from me to grouse in any way, but...” or “I have noticed that an old custom is not being upheld...” were the norm.<sup>98</sup> The June 1915 issue is a typical example. ‘Punctual’ complains that call-overs do not take place at the advertised time; ‘No. 2 Platoon’ wants an OTC inter-platoon competition; ‘AR Tistic’ has noticed that many school photographs in the New Hall don’t have glass; ‘An Upholder of MOS’ notes that the motto over the New Hall door is partly illegible; ‘Locked Out’ has failed to get into the fives courts; ‘FOR Ward’ wants the footer shields in the gym updated; and ‘Slazenger H’ wants improvements to the tennis courts. About one in seven of the letters might be regarded as on war-related subjects, but almost entirely insofar as they affected the School. Most are concerned with the (relative) trivia of daily life in a boarding school.

Any attempt to sum up the consequences of the war for the school is problematic. In the immediate aftermath, numbers recovered, and both work and sport quickly went back to normal. In the longer term, however, it is hard to distinguish between the effect of the War and the effect of the headmastership of Algernon Latter. Although Latter had his defenders, it seems to be generally agreed that the School stagnated in the post-war decade – a process to be reversed by Norman Birley, Headmaster from 1927 to 1935, and then, more dramatically and ostentatiously, by Canon John Shirley, Headmaster from 1935 to 1962. Latter’s aim of sending out “clean, straight, self-reliant characters”, expressed in 1917 and repeated in peacetime, was seen by critics as reflecting the lower academic standards in the School and the increased prominence of games.

Charles Buckwell who had won an Organ Scholarship to Oriel College, Oxford in the academic year 1923-4, was scathing about this:

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<sup>97</sup> *The Cantuarian*, November 1916, pp. 277-8.

<sup>98</sup> *The Cantuarian*, June 1916, p. 222 and March 1917, p. 402.

During this period I believe only one open Scholarship was gained at the Universities. This was a Musical Scholarship and was treated with the contempt with which in those days, generally speaking, the Arts were regarded. The boy who gained the Musical Scholarship was clearly slightly abnormal and moreover, being no good, much, at games, the abnormality appeared conclusive. The announcement of the Scholarship from the second step of the Memorial Court (a practice which began at this time) was greeted with a roar of laughter, but a half holiday. Rugger coronat opus semper!<sup>99</sup>

In fact there had been a few other awards, but Buckwell's general point about a slide in academic standards and an increase in philistinism seems to have been correct.

In the ten years after the War, there were eight Captains of School. All were King's Scholars and all were successful sportsmen. Six played in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV (and the other two were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV); five were in the 1<sup>st</sup> IV; and two in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI. Moreover five were Captains of major sports, with Richard Jukes Captain of Rugby and Cricket, as well as Fives. There is the clear impression that the 'bloods' dominated under Latter and that King's was much more of a 'traditional' public school in the 1920s than it had been in the days of Arthur Galpin. James Lainé, a boy from 1921 to 1926, expressed the view that "the King's School of this time was the last survival of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*."<sup>100</sup> It was as if the War had never been.

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<sup>99</sup> Charles Buckwell, Reminiscences in KSC Archives.

<sup>100</sup> For this and other reminiscences of Latter's time see Edwards, *A History of the King's School Canterbury*, especially pp. 162-6. Cf. *Seventeen: a Novel of School Life* by Alaric Jacob, who was at King's from 1922 to 1925.