



HALLOW HISTORY ARCHIVES

WWII - Hallow Welcome Home Forces Fund

In early 1945 a charity "Hallow Welcome Home Forces Fund" was suggested and following a public meeting at the Parish Hall on 21 February 1945, which was attended by about 70 people, it was decided how the charity should set about raising money from within the Hallow Ecclesiastical parish, to give as a token of gratitude to returning Service men and women and nurses.

A list of names was drawn up of those who had been serving during WWII (or their dependants if the service person had died). There were 166 names, eight of whom had died - George Collins (Archbell Cottages, Hallow), Ronald Harris (Lechmere Crescent), Harold Hunt (Lechmere Crescent), Wilfred Munslow (Stoneycroft, Hallow), Eric Tyler (Parkfield Lane, Hallow), Richard Whiley (Oak Cottage, Hallow), Harold Webb (Parkfield Lane, Hallow) and Royston Williams (Park Farm, Hallow).

The Fund was registered with the Worcestershire County Council in accordance with the War Charities Act 1940. At the first meeting of the Committee, suggestions for fund raising included a Pony Show and Race Meeting, a Tennis Tournament and a Garden Fete. The Committee discussed having an outdoor Boxing Tournament and suggested a field off Moseley Road. It was reported that Mr T Davies of Hallow Park was willing to hold a Dance at the Shire Hall and offered to accept liability for such an event.

The final accounts of the Fund show that a successful Gymkhana was held on 28th April 1945 and a profit of £93 2s 2½ d was made. Other income for the Fund was raised from a variety of events including Heath Farm Garden Fete, two Dances – one organised for the Youth Club, Games on the Playing Field on V.E. Day, a Whist Drive, a sale of Fancy Goods by Miss Richardson, Bowling for a Pig and a collection at the Royal Oak Inn on V.E. Day. Personal donations amounted to £202 and there was a donation from the local branch of the British Legion of £58 9s 9d.

The money for distribution by the charity was over £500. In April 1946 cheques for £3.50 (with the purchasing power of over £100 today), were made out to each serviceman and woman and nurse together with a letter sending Hallow parishioners ". . . thanks and best wishes for your future welfare, and assure you that we do welcome you or shall welcome you home to Hallow parish". If anyone did not wish to participate the cheques could be returned to the Treasurer and the amount would then be credited to Hallow & District British Legion.

Letters of thanks were received from this country and abroad. Just a few of those letters returned the cheques. (Captain Maurice Horne of the Royal Engineers returned his because he was a regular soldier).

Christopher and Dorothy Lock's son Raymond, wrote from Westfield in Hallow to thank those from within the parish "who endeavoured to make this appreciable gift possible. As your letter stated, the fund was raised within the Parish itself rather than from an outside source, and it is

this fact alone which makes it feel to me more of a personal gift, coming through the endeavour of people whom I know myself. Whilst being away from home I have had opportunities to see the world, but there is still no place for me like dear old England, and my corner of that place still the County of Worcestershire with its village of Hallow, my home and my life-long friends, to whom I am indebted for this token of gratitude."

David John Munslow of Stoneycroft's letter was from Combe Martin in Devon thanking all those parishioners had contributed to the fund "which I am sure the boys will appreciate."

Ada Atkinson who had been the District Nurse living at 2 Lea House wrote from the Maternity Home in Castleford where she was working, with her appreciation and grateful thanks. During the War Ada was a Staff Nurse in the Territorial Forces Nursing Service at 2nd Northern General Hospital at Beckett Park in Leeds, by coincidence the same hospital where Staff Nurse Violet Pratt from the Royal Oak had served during WWI. Ada "treasured the seven happy years" in Hallow and mentions how during the War she sometimes met lads from Worcestershire and that "they were as glad as I to talk of familiar places", She hoped "that the list was small of the brave lads who did not return" and to their people sent her "heartfelt sympathies".

In January 1946 the Parish Magazine had reported that -
"We ought to be thinking of a suitable memorial for those who gave their lives during the war and
also as a thanksgiving for those who return and for peace again."

This memorial can be seen in the church, whilst amongst many documents concerning Hallow parish at the Worcestershire Archives can be found the accounts of the "Hallow Welcome Home Fund", the list of recipients and thank-you letters.

Jacquie Hartwright – Hallow History Group

READ OUR RESEARCH TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE: www.hallowhistory.org.uk