

# KINGS WESTON AT WAR

Published Fortnightly.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

## BRISTOL & THE WAR

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED "THE BRISTOLIAN".

Vol. 1. No. 3.

OCTOBER 31, 1914.

### CANADIAN TROOPS IN BRISTOL.



#### MARCHING THROUGH SHIREHAMPTON PARK.

THE fine body of Canadian troops arrived at Avonmouth in the early hours of Sunday morning, October 18th, and as the great liner swept majestically into the entrance harbour there came from her decks and port holes cheer after cheer. Clad in Khaki, these bronze-featured soldiers from the Dominion shouted enthusiastically their greetings to Britain's shores. Owing to their early arrival, there were but few people in the dockyard at the time to receive them, but what these lacked in numbers they made compensation in the warmth and heartiness of their welcome. The work attended with the disembarkation of the troops was accomplished in a remarkably short space of time, after which the bugles and drum and fife bands announced to the people of Avonmouth the fact of their arrival. The inhabitants speedily turned out of their houses and gave the Canadians a rousing reception. The soldiers departed from the Pier station in special trains, the men waving flags from the carriage windows, and cheering heartily as they left for their destination.

There was a lot going on around Kings Weston at the time of the First World War. From the house high up on the hill, you could see Avonmouth Docks where soldiers arrived from Canada and America before joining the war in Europe.

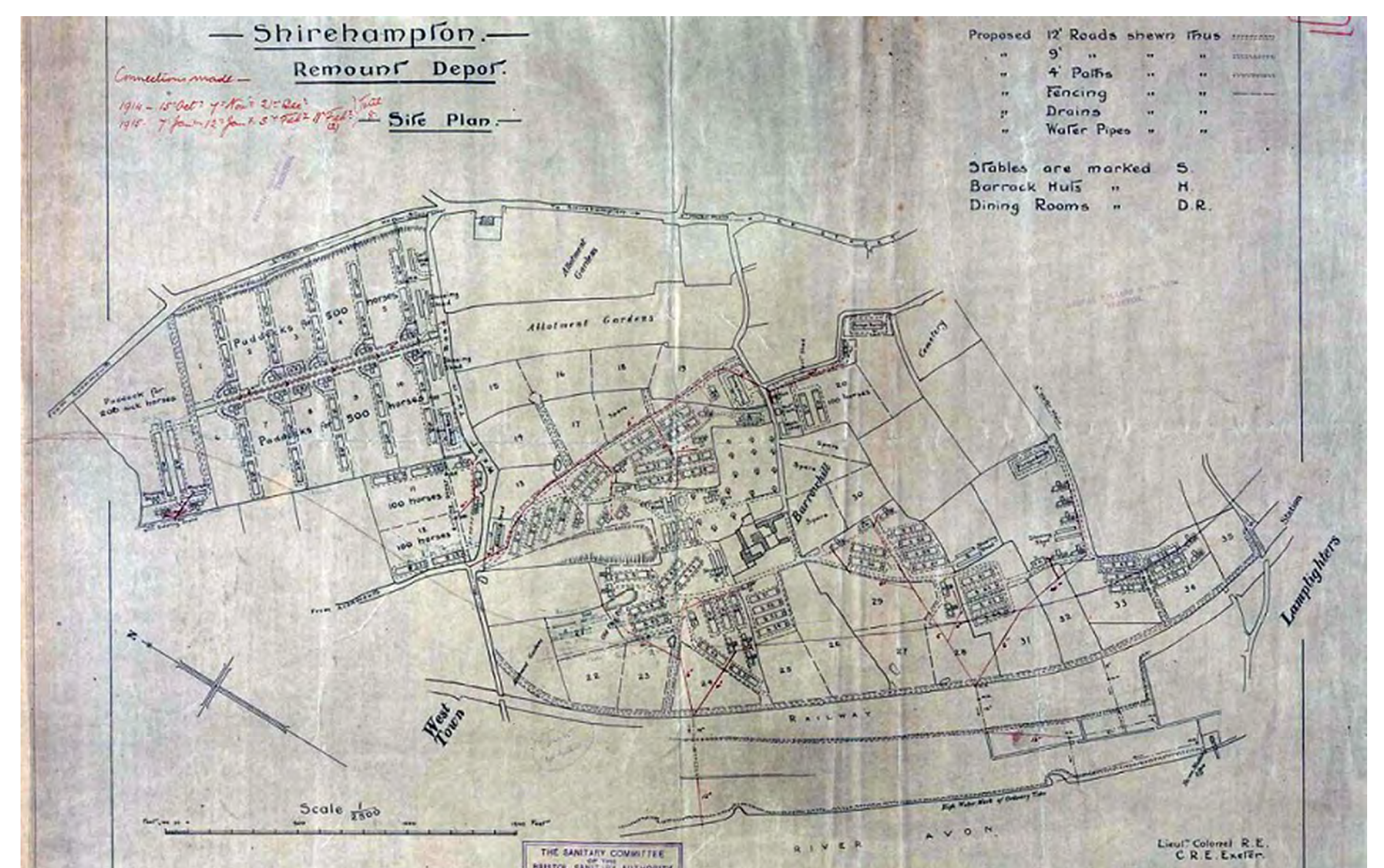
You could also have seen the two big munitions factories on the banks of the Severn that produced chemicals for artillery shells. Close by in Shirehampton was the "Remount Depot". This was a big army camp set up to supply the army with war horses. Horses were very important during the First World War and many hundreds were kept and trained there before being sent off to war. The horses were let out to eat the grass in the parkland around Kings Weston House, and one of the photos here shows them grazing alongside the main road.

In 1916 the King came to Shirehampton to visit the Remount Depot and the Royal train was parked just below Kings Weston so the King could enjoy his lunch looking out over a beautiful view the River Avon.

### Avonmouth Remount Depot.



G Squadron, June 1915.



SHIREHAMPTON PARK.



# 1914-1918



Kings  
Weston  
Action  
Group



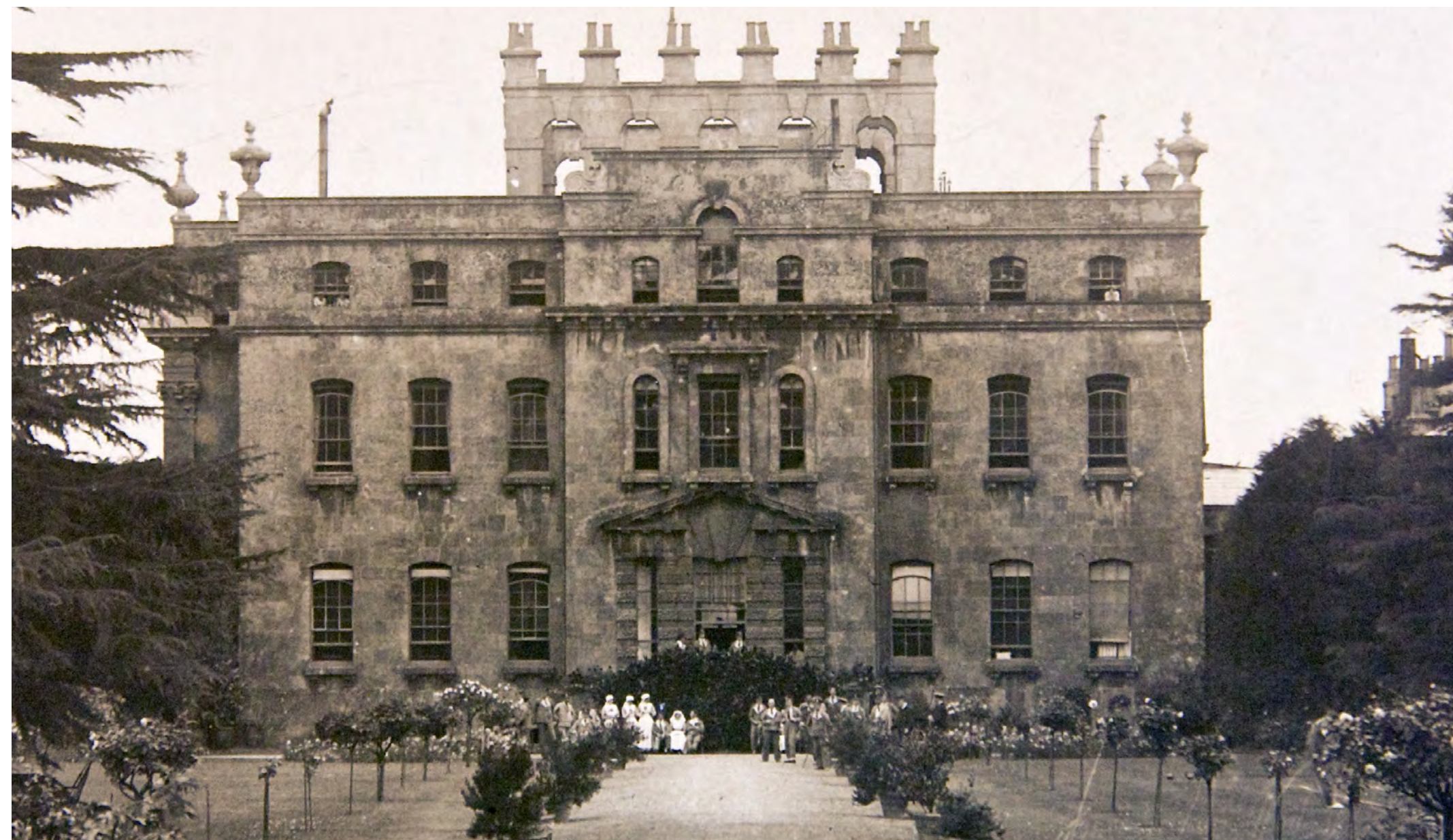
# KINGS WESTON AT WAR

At the outbreak of the First World War the owners of Kings Weston House, Philip Napier Miles, and his wife Sybil, wanted to help the war effort and turned their big mansion into a hospital for wounded soldiers. They ran the hospital themselves and it became an "Auxiliary" Hospital. This meant that they didn't care for the most heavily injured soldiers, but instead provided care for less serious wounds and for patients who needed time to recover.

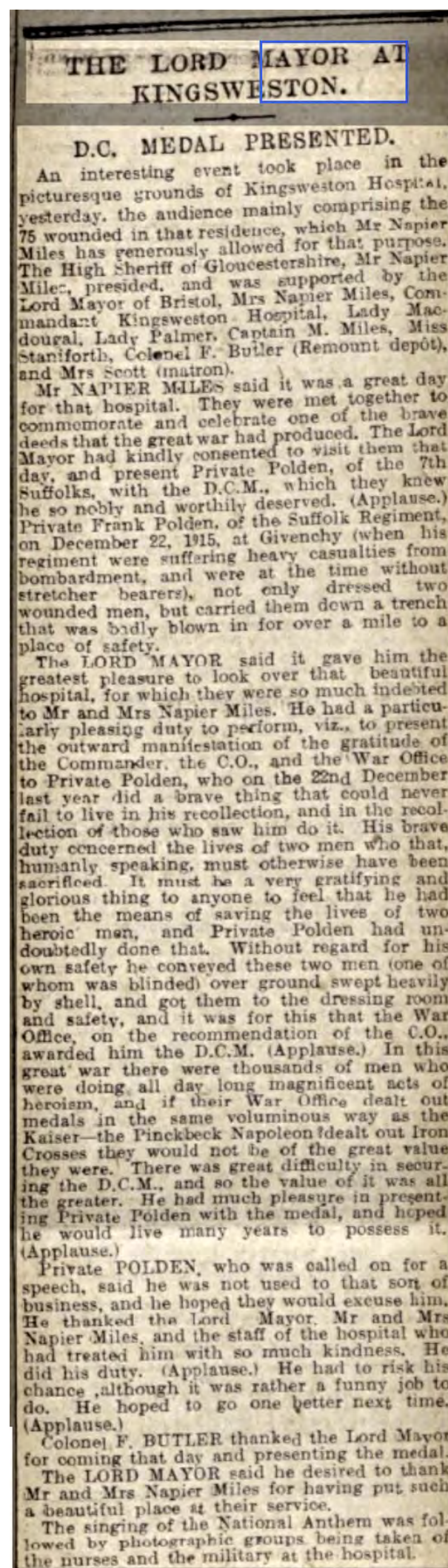
The big rooms in the house were turned into hospital wards and Red Cross nurses cared for soldiers while they stayed there. If you go to the house today the longest room on the ground floor was the main ward, but before the war had been the Library and music room.

The gardens around the house were ideal for fresh air and relaxation that soldiers needed to recover. We are lucky that we have several photographs from this time and you can see the soldiers and their nurses posing for the photographer.

When they were sent back to England from the war in Europe soldiers were allowed to wear their army caps, but they didn't wear the rest of their uniform while they were in the hospital. It was thought that seeing other soldiers in uniform might upset people who had been wounded very traumatically. Instead they wore "Hospital blues". This was a special uniform just for use in hospital and most of the soldiers photographed on the steps are wearing them. In the same photo you can also spot some of the wounds the soldiers suffered - there are many arms bandaged in slings and no one looks very happy.



WESTERN DAILY PRESS, BRISTOL, SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1916.



CAN YOU FIND WHERE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN?



1914-1918



Kings  
Weston  
Action  
Group



# KINGS WESTON AT WAR

WESTERN DAILY PRESS, BRISTOL MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 1916.

## FETE AND TOURNAMENT AT KINGSWESTON.

### FINE RED CROSS EFFORT.

A most successful effort was made by residents of Henbury, Shirehampton, and Avonmouth on behalf of the Bristol branch of the Red Cross Society in the fête and military tournament which were commenced on Saturday afternoon. The attractiveness of the various arrangements announced may be judged from the fact that during Saturday afternoon and evening between 5,000 and 6,000 people visited the park. The High Sheriff of Gloucestershire and Mrs Napier Miles, had kindly thrown open practically the whole of the beautiful park and gardens for the enjoyment of the visitors, who found much pleasure in the different features of the grounds and the magnificent views obtained of the Severn and the Welsh Hills. For the benefit of those who came from a distance the Rev. C. P. Way, the chairman of the Executive Committee, had thoughtfully prepared a small guide giving some interesting particulars of the park and house, where a number of wounded soldiers are now regaining health and strength. The arrangements for the fête were admirably made by a committee consisting of Mrs C. P. Way, Mrs Grigg, Major Waite, Messrs Alex. B. Carter, C. A. Newman, McEwan Smith, G. A. Collins, T. Lees, E. Powell, H. Ledson, E. T. Grey, George Carter, and A. S. Williams, with the Rev. E. C. Childs and Mr E. C. Hodges as hon. treasurers and Mr Albert Winfield as hon. secretary.

Besides the military tournament, to which reference is made below, there were attractions of a very special character. One of the principal of these was the splendid series of concerts given during the afternoon and evening by the M.U.I. entertainers in a large marquee, these concerts being interspersed with dainty dancing displays by the pupils of Miss Maddocks. The entertainments were under the direction of Mr and Mrs W. H. Read, who had the assistance of a large number of ladies and gentlemen in providing concerts which were very greatly appreciated and attended by large numbers. Amongst those taking part in the entertainments on Saturday as to-day are Miss Blanche Davis, Miss Marian Elles, Miss Evelyn Gorn, Miss Sophie Jones, Miss May Phelan, Miss Ethel Smith, Miss Margaret Shapland, Miss Gladys Schellin, Miss Grace Troake, Miss Elsie White, Miss Elsie Wilmett, Miss Jessie Whittrick, Mr Reg. Morgan, Mr Y. H. Read, Mr Leonard Rowe, Mr Charles Smith, Mr R. Thomas (songs), Mr J. H. Cozens (cornet solos), Mr Fred Hunt (humorous items), Private Pocock (sleight of hand and card manipulations), Miss Myra Prendergast (violin solos), Mrs W. H. Read (creations), Miss Rosa Richfield (violin solos), and Mr Fred Vallance (ventriloquial and conjuring entertainment). Mr Read was also able to secure an extra attraction in Mr James Brokenbrow, comedian of the principal London revues. At the last concert each evening the M.U.I. (Motor Union Insurance) party appear in striking costumes of black and yellow, the A.A. colours.

In the open air the band of the 1st Batt. Gloucester Regiment played excellent selections during the afternoon and evening, and under the shade of the trees near by tea tables were very temptingly placed, the ladies in charge of the teas being Mrs Way and Mrs Grigg. Nearer the house Mr Napier Miles had enclosed a small part of the grounds for the exclusive use of men from the Kings Weston Auxiliary Hospital, and here they and the nurses had a good view of the tournament. Various amusements were arranged by a games' sub-committee, consisting of Messrs T. R. Lees, Gilbert Long Enos Lee, Sgt. Major Bergin, Mr W. Brook, Mr W. Broad, and Miss Hort. Bowling for a pig, kicking the football, and other games also found a good share of patrons.

A floral, fruit, and produce bazaar was organised by the Shirehampton Horticultural Society, of which Mr A. B. Carter is the chairman and Mr G. H. Carter the secretary. Residents of the district had contributed most generously to the splendid collection of flowers, fruit, and vegetables, which readily found purchasers. Amongst the cut flowers a magnificent display was sent by Messrs House, of Westbury. Miss Hamham was in charge of the sales at this tent.

In the racquet court, near the Kings Weston House Gate, there was an interesting exhibition of pictures in pastel and water colours, by Mr Edward H. C. Chetwood-Aiken for sale.

### THE MILITARY TOURNAMENT.

For the majority of visitors the chief interest of the day was certainly centred in the military tournament. When the idea was first put forward both officers and men at the Remount Depot threw themselves into the scheme wholeheartedly, and Major A. W. Waite, the hon. secretary of the tournament, worked particularly hard. The proceedings were under the patronage of Col. D. C. Carter, C.B., and the judges were Lieut.-Colonel Richardson-Gardner, Col. E. Currie, Major E. Hill, and Mr Roper Tyler, while the Executive Committee consisted of Lieut.-Colonel F. J. P. Butler, Major D. St. G. Daly, Major H. Laurie, Major J. Taylor, Major W. R. Collins, Captain T. E. Bage, and Capt.-R. J. Collins. Staff Sergeant A. Barrow acted as clerk to the course. The tournament opened with various parades of horses, some fine horses being seen, and later there were events of a more exciting nature, including jumping over hurdles, wrestling on mules, "filling the bucket," tent pegging, pillow fights, and other exhibitions of skill. The jumping was especially good, particularly that of A Squadron (Major Herbert Laurie). Amongst the lighter incidents of the tournament were the collections made from the on-lookers by Pte. L. Pieracini with his performing horse, assisted by Miss V. Jeffery; and Sgt. Fred May's performing monkey, which rode on its owner's shoulder during the competitions in which he took part.

The events resulted as follows:—  
Parade on Chargers.—1, Major Laurie's Well Done; 2, Capt. Elgar's Orderly Officer; 3, Major Rendall's Peter.

Officers' Cobs.—1, Lieut. Stacey's Angelina; 2, Major Laurie's Sportsman; 3, Lieut.-Col. Butler's Baby.

Best R.I. Horses.—1, A Squadron (Sgt. Palmer); 2, A Squadron (Lance-Corporal Thatcher); 3, A Squadron (Sgt. Minto).

Best R 2 Horses.—1, D Squadron (Sgt. Major Meal); 2, J Squadron (Corpl. Wells); 3, A Squadron (Sgt. Palmer).

Best Pair Light Draught Horses.—1, G Squadron (Ptes. Johnson and Goldsmith); 2, B Squadron (Ptes. Godfrey and Dimmock); 3, J Squadron (Ptes. Carter and Biddle).

Best Pair Heavy Draught Horses.—1, H Squadron (Ptes. Button and Whitehead); 2, D Squadron (Ptes. Carpenter and Thomas).

Best Pair Heavy Draught Mules.—1, E Squadron (Ptes. Newman and Sanders); 2, J Squadron (Ptes. Coombs and Young).

Officers' Jumping.—1, Major Laurie's Gamecock; 2, Lieut. Hughes's Topham; 3, Lieut. Stacey's Angelina.

Tent Pegging.—1, Sgt.-Major Field; 2, Sgt.-Major Brain; 3, Sgt.-Major Loungair.

Section Jumping in Pairs.—1, A Squadron (Lance-Corpl. Thatcher, Lance-Corpl. William Ptes. Holmes and Carnev); 2, B 1 Section (Sgt.-Major Green, Sgt. Forrester, Ptes. Geaney and Parkinson); 3, B C Section (Lance-Corpl. Goddard and Gorton, Ptes. Goddard and Kelly).

Best Transport Turn-out.—1, 2 and 3, G Squadron (Ptes. Neaverson, Haddrell, and Bishop).

Section Mr's Jumping in Pairs.—1, E 3 Section (Corpl. Nicholls and Lance-Corpl. Neshercott); 2, H 1 Section (Ptes. Brownley and Payne); 3, C 2 Section (Lance-Corpl. Meek and Pte. Grant).

Wrestling on Mules.—H Squadron won.

Veterans' Race.—1, R.S.M. Townsend; 2, Sgt. Platt; 3, Pte. Allen; 4, Shoddy Smith Sheppard.

100 Yards (scratch).—1, Lieut.-Corpl. Mileom; 2, Pte. Goddard; 3, Pte. Robinson.

Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Race.—1, R.S.M. Townsend; 2, Sgt. Smith; 3, Sgt. Drinkwater.

The fête and tournament will be continued to-day at four o'clock. A special attraction for this evening will be an auction sale of gifts for the Red Cross Fund. Mr Victor Youre (Messrs Luce, Young, and Algate) has kindly consented to conduct the sale, and amongst the "lots" already received will be two pedigree Jersey bull calves, other calves, sheep, lambs, pigs, poultry, joints of meat, vegetables, corn, and coal. There will also be offered for sale a relic of the Falkland Island battle in the form of a soap tin riddled with bullets, a set of capers and two French sword-bayonets of 1780, gifts of the Avonmouth and Shirehampton police.

To raise money to run the hospital Philip Napier Miles, the owner of the house, opened it up for charity. Visitors would pay a fee and enjoy his historic gardens and know they were helping the Red Cross at the same time. We have a little programme that was sold to visitors that guides them around the gardens and also tells us some details about the hospital. It also says that in 1916 many new soldiers arrived meaning that they could not let visitors into the house. Do you know what battle might have caused all these casualties?



Below: Philip Napier Miles of Kings Weston House, Composer, 1865-1935.



In 1917 Philip Napier Miles of Kings Weston House wrote a series of choral pieces of music set for the war poems of Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. The poems had been published the year previous and were very popular at the time. Gibson lived and wrote in Dymock, Gloucestershire, but it isn't known whether Philip Napier Miles knew him as a friend or not.

Napier Miles' work would have been composed at Kings Weston House, which at the time operated as an Auxiliary Hospital and was full of wounded soldiers. He would have seen the injuries and the emotional damage the war had caused, and heard stories from the front line in Europe. Gibson's poems helped express the feelings he must have had, and by setting them to music he created something positive and beautiful from a situation in which he was otherwise powerless to change.

The song cycle was published during the war, in 1917, and must have proved popular as a second series was produced in 1929, a decade after the Peace had been declared. The poems that Napier Miles chose for his choral works are included here:

*The Quiet:*  
From "the Battle" published 1916/5

I could not understand the sudden quiet  
The sudden darkness in the crash of fight,  
The din and glare of day quenched in a twinkling  
In utter starless night.

I lay an age and idly gazed at nothing,  
Half-puzzled that I could not lift my head;  
And then I knew somehow that I was lying  
Among the other dead.  
Hit  
From "the Battle" published 1916

Out of the sparkling sea  
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay  
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,  
Basking, and watching lazily  
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn Salt  
In the sun that drenched it through and through  
Till every particle glowed clean and new  
And slowly seemed to turn  
To lucent amber in a world of blue

... I felt a sudden wrench A trickle of warm blood  
And found that I was sprawling in the mud  
Among the dead men in the trench.

*Retreat*  
From "the Battle" published 1916

Broken, bewildered by the long retreat  
Across the stifling leagues of southern plain,  
Across the scorching leagues of trampled grain,  
Half-stunned, half-blinded, by the trudge of feet  
And dusty smother of the August heat,  
He dreamt of flowers in an English lane,  
Of hedgerow flowers glistening after rain  
All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet.

All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet  
The innocent names kept up a cool refrain  
All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet,  
Chiming and tinkling in his aching brain,  
Until he babbled like a child again  
"All-heal and willow-herb and meadow-sweet."

*The Dancers*  
From "the Battle" published 1916

All day beneath the hurtling shells  
Before my burning eyes  
Hover the dainty demoiselles  
The peacock dragon-flies.

Unceasingly they dart and glance  
Above the stagnant stream  
And I am fighting here in France  
As in a senseless dream.

A dream of shattering black shells  
That hurtle overhead,  
And dainty dancing demoiselles  
Above the dreamless dead.

*The Lark*  
From "the Battle" published 1916

A lull in the racket and brattle,  
And a lark soars into the light  
And its song seems the voice of the light  
Quelling the voices of night And the shattering fury of battle.

But again the fury of battle Breaks out,  
and he drops from the height  
Dead as a stone from the height Drops dead,  
and the voice of the light Is drowned  
in the shattering brattle.



Above: Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, Poet, 1878 - 1962

# 1914-1918



Kings  
Weston  
Action  
Group



# KINGS WESTON AT WAR



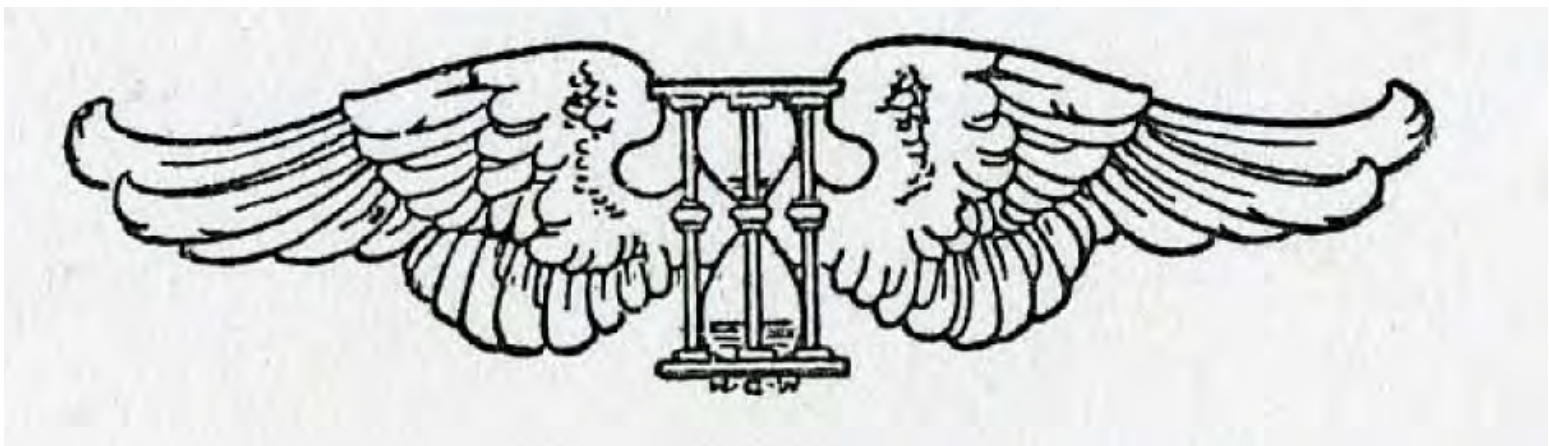
Philip's wife, Sybil, worked very hard in the hospital and after the war she was given the OBE. The hospital closed in 1919, after the end of the war, and there was a plaque made that still sits over the front door of the house commemorating the happy times that recovering soldiers spent there.

There was also a prisoner of war camp at Penpole Point on the Kings Weston Estate. We think that this was where the Oasis Academy School is today on Penpole Lane. We only have one photo of it. Look out for the two kittens the German prisoners are holding in the photo and notice the barbed wire to stop them escaping out of the windows.

During the war there had been a lot of local people killed and afterwards Philip Napier Miles donated a piece of land in his parkland to put up a stone cross as a war memorial. He unveiled it a few years later in 1921 and ever since then has been well kept by the local people of Shirehampton.



GO OUTSIDE AND SEE  
IF YOU CAN SEE THE  
MEMORIAL PLAQUE  
ON THE FRONT OF THE



## 1914-1918



Kings  
Weston  
Action  
Group