

Explore the Archive Letters and Postcards

During the First World War many families were separated for a very long time, even years. As the war went on those who did return were often badly injured. It was very hard for families. To make sure their loved ones knew they were thinking of them postcards, letters and parcels were regularly sent to the Front.

When the soldiers sent letters home it is clear that these parcels and letters were really important to them. Many of their replies were printed in the local paper. Like the letter over the page from a soldier to a pupil at East Parade school.

The boys at East Parade had collected and sent Christmas Puddings out to the men. This was just one of many activities children took part in during the war.

All over the country the Scouts and Girl Guides carried messages for the War Office and learnt semaphore. Scouts guarded important place like the railways and kept watch for Zeppelins. The Girl Guides helped deliver milk, parcel up clothing for soldiers and learnt first aid. If you weren't a member of a group you could still help.

Many children knitted scarves and gloves to send to soldiers. Others helped out on farms. In Horsham some were even given time off school to go blackberry picking. The berries went to Richardson's Jam factory on East Street.

Children also helped by selling flags and badges on Flag Days. These were charity events held to raise money. In Horsham there were many flag days and other events. These included concerts to raise money for the families of wounded soldiers and sailors. Many were advertised by posters.

Other places for pupils to check for information:

Knight, J. 2011 Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4, Horsham District Council

Knight, J. and Mitchell, J. 2014 Horsham on the Front Line 1914-1918, Horsham Museum Society

[The Great War 1914-1918](#) on the West Sussex County Council's Library Service Online Learning Resources.



© Horsham District Council's Horsham Museum and Art Gallery
A zeppelin photographed above Horsham
Railway Station



West Sussex County Times printed this letter from P.F. Schoneld ERA of HMS Maidstone. He had sent it to Thomas Baker a student at East Parade School. Below are snippets from the letter.

1st January 1916

Thanks for Christmas Puddings

"Dear Laddie,

It is very kind and thoughtful of you all to go to so much trouble on our behalf, giving up for our sakes so much of your playtime as you must be doing [...] You will be interested to hear that four of the puddings which the boys in your school sent came into this Mess (that is what we call the room we live and have our meals in) and I can assure you they were very much appreciated and many a thought went out to the laddies in your school for their kind unselfishness in providing us with Xmas fare which we should not have otherwise have had. We are always grateful too for the fresh fruit and vegetables which are sent. [...] I hope, sonny, that father and uncles will all come safely through hand soon be home again in dear old England. Thanking you once again on behalf of my messmates and myself for your kindness."

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Letter to the Front

Imagine you are writing a letter to your father/ brother/ cousin or friend on the Front Line. You want them to know what you have been doing to help out.

Explore the Horsham Posters archive for inspiration. Go to the website www.horshamposters.com and read about some of the events that happened in war time Horsham. (Use Select posters to find the World War One Subject. You can then use the secondary subjects 'Events' to narrow your search). Posters such as the Grand Fete and Bazaar poster also have additional documents in the 'more information' link which will help you. For more hints on using the website check out the '[Top tips for Searching the Archive](#)'.

Write your letter covering three key things:

1. What you are doing to help out at home, (what do you think would reassure the soldiers?)
2. Describe an event you attended, (think about not just what happens but what it sounded like, smelt like, felt like.)
3. Message of support (what would you say to your father/brother who is far away and maybe in danger?)



WWI