

THE BROCKLEY NEWS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9TH, 1918

DEPTFORD CELEBRATIONS



The anniversary was observed in Deptford by the usual procession, followed by a meeting and demonstration on the Hilly Fields in the afternoon. The procession, which was headed by the Union Jack, left the Town Hall at 3 o'clock, travelling by way of High-street, Friendly-street, Wickham-road, Harefield-road, and Tressillian-road. A detachment of the 16th Batt. C.L.V. Regiment, was followed by the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and the St. John V.A.D. Nursing Division, the 2nd Deptford (St. Luke's) Troop of Scouts, 3rd Deptford Troop, 1st New Cross Troop, 1st Crofton Park Troop, St. Laurence, Catford, Troop, St. James',

Hatcham, Troop, 4th Brockley Wolf Cub Pack, and several members of the 5th Brockley Troop. The Mayor and Corporation were accompanied by the Revs. A. Amos, E. Davies, J. Barker, W. F. Jepson, E. B. Rae, G. Barber, J. W. Niven, W. Broadbent, and S. H. Tucker, all of whom were on foot, preceded by churchwardens and sidesmen of the respective churches, who carried their staves.

Amongst others taking part were the St. John's K.R.R. Cadet Corps, ladies of the Deptford War Hospital Supply Depot, who wore their uniforms and veils, the

Mayor's War Fund collectors, a large detachment of the W.A.A.C., the Deptford Branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, and local companies of the C.L.B and Girl Guides.

Large numbers of people assembled along the route, and the crowd which gathered on the Hilly Fields was larger than that of any previous occasion. Among those in the vicinity of the platform were Capt. W. T. Allen, Ald. E. G. G. Bax, Ald. Berryman, Councillors Brooks, Carnell and Aucutt, Mr. T. E. Charles, Mr. W.

Baker, Mr. Redman, Mr. F. W. Allwright and Mr. A. G. Matthews.

The intercession service was conducted by the Revs. A. Amos, J. W. Niven, G. Barber, W. Broadbent, E. Davies, and other ministers present, after which the platform was occupied by the Mayor, the Right Hon. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., Col. The Hon. Rupert Carington, Mr. T. Howard Deighton, C.C., and the Rev. J. W. Niven.

The Mayor said they had gathered together that day to show that the citizens of Deptford had the same ideals on the fourth anniversary of the war as they had

on August 4th, 1914. It was a source of great congratulation that the whole of the country were holding similar meetings on that day, for it was quite apparent that such meetings were a vital necessity, when they came across people who were ready to give up. England was faced with three great enemies, the man who clamoured for peace at any price, the man who said he had had enough of it, and the man who had a bad war memory, and forgot such things as the sinking of the Lusitania, the use of poison gas, the murdering of women and children, the plundering of towns and villages, and all the other miserable habits of an enemy whose one delight was to hit below the belt. The war could not be won until Germany had been given the knock-out blow, and there must be no such thing as a stalemate. Peace would either mean degradation or complete victory for the Allies. The people at home were called upon to assist the Allies at the front by showing their determination to see the war through to a final and complete victory.

Mr. Bowerman said that on the fourth anniversary of the war their minds went back to that memorable day in 1914 when it became known that England had joined in the conflict. Would anyone ever forget the wonderful stand made by that gallant little country of Belgium, faced with the choice of being ruthlessly devastated or of losing its power for ever. And because she had chosen the better part, without regarding what might happen in the future, England was at war that day, and

there had been no word of regret from those who were responsible at the action which she had taken, for surely, had she done otherwise, her cousins across the sea would have asked where the British backbone had gone to. Were they ever likely to forget the war? No, the sacrifice in France, and the pain and agony at home had been felt by them all, but wherever one went he found that it was being borne in a remarkably fine spirit. When disaster overtook the boys on land and sea, and when dark shadows hung over the homes of the people, there was no whimpering or complaining, but a calm, steadfast resolve to see the thing through to a successful finish. America, who, as some people thought, had been a long time in joining the conflict, had been making her preparations continually, and in spite of the splendid men from the Colonies, and the heroes of London and the provinces, had it not been for the intervention of America, things would have been very different that day. He sincerely hoped that it would not be necessary to hold a similar meeting in 1919, and, although they were determined to see the struggle fought to a successful conclusion, yet they looked forward to the day when they would ask the people to celebrate the declaration of peace, a peace which by God's help would be worthy of the sacrifice which had been made by land and sea. The situation was brighter that day than on the previous anniversary, and the enemy was being forced back to such an extent that the German Emperor and his Council would probably be pleased to commence

negotiations as soon as possible, but the Allies were not yet satisfied; no half measures would do, and the war had to be continued until a peace was obtained which would outlive all those present, and endure for all generations. In conclusion, Mr. Bowerman expressed his deep sorrow at the loss which Deptford had sustained by the death of Lieut. Col. the Rev. A. Hart. The religious, social, and municipal life of the neighbourhood had already felt the death of Mr. Hart very keenly, but the real blow had fallen upon the men, women, and children whom he loved, and for whom he laboured so faithfully. He had usually been with them at their anniversary meetings, and he was sadly missed that day. Mr. Bowerman then moved the following resolution: "We, the citizens of Deptford, on the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war, reiterate our determination to continue the war, and to help in every way, to the utmost of our power, until a victorious peace has been obtained over Germany and her Allies."

Mr. Howard Deighton, in seconding, said they celebrated that fourth anniversary with good cause for thankfulness and with the hope of final victory. Last year, when they met together, the armies of Russia had collapsed, and large bodies of German troops were being sent from the Eastern to the Western Front, while the U-boat menace had been so grave at that time that, as Sir Eric Geddes recently remarked, had it not been checked it would have been impossible to have

carried on the war. But all was changed that day, and the situation on the Western Front had been completely transformed, thanks to the bravery of the soldiers and sailors who never allowed themselves to be discouraged, however dark the hour might be. The U.S., with its enormous man-power, air-power, and shipping programme, together with a splendid food organisation, had come to aid the Allies, and by so doing had sealed the doom of Prussian militarism. He was confident that victory would finally be obtained, and trusted that the day of peace was not so far off as some people seemed to think.

Col. Carington, in supporting, said that the fourth anniversary had very aptly been called "The Day of Remembrance." They were proud to remember the gallant deeds of the soldiers and sailors, the valour of the wounded, the revered memory of the fallen, and the courage of those at home. They were also called upon to remember the fatherless children and widows, and all that were desolate and oppressed. America, the great, unconquerable ally, was with them, and would be with them to the end. France, that glorious country, to whom they owed a debt greater than they could ever repay, was still loyal and faithful, and he was confident that the end would be nothing else but a complete victory for the Allies. He was going to ask the Mayor to send a message from that meeting to the lads at the Front. Should it be that they were crying for peace, when there was no peace? No, it should be "Fight on, good luck, God bless you, and

we will see that things go straight at home.” The Allied cause was absolutely just, therefore they began their fifth year of war with the utmost confidence, and they approached the throne of grace, not with the blatant blasphemy of the German ruler, but reverently, asking God to bless their efforts, and to grant them victory and peace.

The Rev. J. W. Niven, who also supported the resolution, said that August 4th, 1914, was pre-eminently and for all time Britain’s Day. That day would be observed long after the thunder of the guns had ceased, for it was a day which stood high in the history of England, a day of undying renown, and a day when the defeat of Germany was written once and for all. The declaration of war by England had been in reality the declaration of peace, a peace which should endure for ever, and save the Empire and the world from future conflicts. England could easily have remained outside, and had she done so the war would have been over long since. But Belgium and France would have been devastated, the prestige and honour of England would have gone for ever, the arrogant spirit of Germany would have dominated the world, and Britain’s seaborne trade would have come to an end, while very possibly the Motherland would have been at the mercy of the invading, bloodthirsty millions. Today the pacifists were standing quietly by, looking on, and reading homilies as to how the ruffian could be turned into a gentleman, and the murderer into a

Christian, but what Germany wanted was not a homily, but a hammering, not a tract, but a jolly good thrashing. The road that stretched ahead was a rough one, and infinitely costly. Yet at the same time it was infinitely inspiring that out of that world conflict a new nation would be born in which the pacifist would have no part. August 4th, 1914, had been a day illuminated with the light of Hell, and brilliant with the light of Heaven. When the great German War Lord had let loose his hosts to ravage Europe, the duty of England was clear, and that had entered the conflict, but with several misconceptions. Many had thought that the Germans would meet with a swift retribution, and many had said that there were two kinds of Germans, the War Lords, who were devotees of the god of War, which indeed they were, and the main bulk of the nation, who were quiet, industrious, peace-loving, religious people, which indeed they were not. Germany was one in a bad cause, and the Allies must be one in a good cause, closing their ranks, shutting out the pacifists, and taking up the battle-cry, “Fight on, Fight on.”

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried without a single dissident, after which the National Anthem was sung, and hearty cheers were given for the speakers, the Mayor, and the men at the Front.