



## Wars

The civil war in the 1640s probably had some impact on the area as we are close to Chalgrove, where there was a major battle and also Thame, where there was a Parliamentary garrison. However there are few records relating to events in this parish. The Royalist troops were reported to have taken horses from the countryside locally and to have taken a Gentleman's coach in Aston. There was an unknown soldier of the parliamentary side buried in Aston Church in 1643. The King's troops were under Aston and Kingston Hills in that same year, so it is likely that there were minor skirmishes in this area as the troops from both parties passed through. Both the Cavaliers and Roundheads probably levied taxes on the inhabitants of the parish.

In both world wars last century many local young men went to serve and there is a memorial, dedicated to the men who lost their lives, in Aston churchyard. This memorial was originally erected at the chapel in Kingston. Many of them served in the Oxon. & Bucks. Light Infantry. In the First World War patriotic concerts were held locally to support them. In 1914 the schoolchildren had a half-day holiday for a concert in aid of H.R.H. Princess Mary's fund and the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Oxon. & Bucks. Light Infantry. In the same year the children had a holiday from school for a dissenter's fete. In 1916 a patriotic concert was held for the Belgian relief fund.

Mr Seymour, who worked on Woodway Farm before the war, recalled going to the Rhine for two years but because he was a farm worker he was called back. Schoolchildren were given a longer lunch break as they too were needed to work on the land. In 1915 they had a half-day holiday from school because the soldiers were marching through the village.

Everything seemed to be put on hold during the war. The parish council asked the Motor Union in 1915 for a danger sign to be placed at The Lion crossroads at the bottom of Kingston Hill but they were told everything was in abeyance. The local agent for the Aylesbury Brewery Company was Mr W. Hatton of Kingston Blount. He was notified of the increase in duty on beer for the duration of the war. The Chancellor in his war budget said 'For every half pint a man drinks he will be contributing to carrying on the War'. Was this a good excuse to drink more?

In 1919, Peace Day celebrations were held when there was a church service at St John's, Kingston Blount and tea at Aston House. A collection was made for a peace memorial and a small gift was given to all who had served.

A little more is known about village life during the Second World War. Being a rural area some men were required to work on the land and these men joined the Home Guard. The

4th Oxfordshire Battalion was the local Home Guard and their Officer in Charge was

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE AYLESBURY BREWERY COMPANY, Ltd.</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE SILVER BULLET.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">"For every half-pint that a man drinks he will be contributing to carrying on the War." Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Nov. 17th, 1914.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Help to Provide that Silver Bullet BY DRINKING A. B. C. ALES, THE TIP-TOP BEER.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>G. T. De Paine &amp; Co., Ltd., Aylesbury.</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WALTON BREWERY, AYLESBURY, December 1st, 1914.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DEAR SIR OR MADAM,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WAR BUDGET, NOVEMBER 1914.</b></p> <p>We beg to enclose a New List of Prices of Beer and Stouts which, owing to the largely increased War Duties placed on the Brewing Trade, we have been compelled to adopt.</p> <p>The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech in the House of Commons said— "For every half-pint (of Beer) that a man drinks he will be contributing to carrying on the War." "We are fully determined in no way to reduce the excellent standard and quality of the article we sell, and we feel assured the name of A.B.C. will be as efficient a security for a high standard of excellence in the future as it has been for so many years in the past.</p> <p>We therefore confidently look forward to your continuing your esteemed patronage with us, and we on our part will do all in our power to merit your approval.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are, Your obedient Servants, AYLESBURY BREWERY CO., LTD.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1914, and until further Notice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ales &amp; Stouts in Bottles.</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"></th> <th style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Per doz. bott.</th> <th style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Half bott.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A.B.C. Light Dinner Ale ...</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3/6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2/-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A.B.C. Dinner Stout ...</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3/6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2/-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">" Prize Stout ...</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4/-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2/3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Guinness's Stout ...</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5/-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2/9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bass's I.P.A. ...</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5/-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2/9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>for the above at</i></p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">THAME—The Anchor Stores. KINGSTON BLOUNT—Agent, Mr. W. C. Hutton. LINSlade—The White Horse Stores. WOLVERTON—Agent, Mr. A. E. Jones, 103, Church Street. BERKHAMPTSTAD—88, High Street.</p>		Per doz. bott.	Half bott.	A.B.C. Light Dinner Ale ...	3/6	2/-	A.B.C. Dinner Stout ...	3/6	2/-	" Prize Stout ...	4/-	2/3	Guinness's Stout ...	5/-	2/9	Bass's I.P.A. ...	5/-	2/9
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Edward Dashwood of Aston Rowant House. In fact the Home Guard did their training in the grounds of the house.

Aston Rowant had some evacuees during the war and the evacuee children went to live at Warren Farm owned by Sir Edward Cadogan, where a school was opened for them. This school closed in 1941. Some of the evacuees attended Aston school as well. In



*The Home Guard in the gardens of Aston House*

1940 we know a party was arranged for them as it was described in the Thame Gazette.

***'Lambert Arms Christmas Party'***

Among many parties given in the county was one at the Lambert Arms on Monday afternoon, 23<sup>rd</sup> December. One hundred children, many evacuees from Barking, together with one hundred percent representation from the surrounding villages of Kingston Blount and Aston Rowant were entertained to a mammoth tea party. There was a splendid tea, Punch and Judy and Father Christmas. "Messrs Perry and Parker-Smith were purveyors of the party"

During the war the air warden would regularly visit the school to do gas mask drill and make sure all the gas masks and stirrup pumps were in working order. There was often no coal for the school as supplies were limited and the children got cold or had to be sent home. When the electricity was put in in 1942, blackout curtains had to be hung too.



*Army Cadets, Mrs Clerke-Brown and ladies marching through Kingston Blount*



*The Home Guard marching through Thame*

Some of the older scholars went to London to see the active service exhibition, which was obviously hoping to attract new recruits. In March 1942 the children were able to get first hand experience of the army as they commandeered the school for the night. The next day the children were taught in the large classroom whilst the army retained the

small room.

Life must have been very difficult during the war years, with the men away fighting; the women were left to make ends meet. Dried eggs were substituted for fresh eggs, creamy spreads for butter and potatoes used for making pastry. Many housewives turned to their gardens to supplement their rations. In 1940 the sugar ration was 12ozs per person per



*Mrs Plumridge and Mrs Turner making munitions in the village hall.*

week, meat 1lb and butter 4ozs. Tea, margarine and cooking fats were rationed to 2ozs per week. By 1941 the cheese ration was only 1oz per person. Women and children had to work in the fields, particularly in the summer and at potato picking time. Early in the war there was no electricity in the villages and no mains water either. In 1942 you were asked not to use more than five inches of water in your bath to save fuel. The dustbins weren't emptied for six years and all the rubbish had to be buried. Even the iron railings were removed from the front of the chapel for use in the war effort. The W.I. and cricket club were suspended for the duration of the war. Women had to take on men's work and the old village hall in Kingston was set up for making munitions. The ladies made fuses and had ovens there to bake them in. Local women also served in the W.R.V.S.

Another celebration was held at the end of the war to celebrate V.E. day. This event took place on The Green in Kingston Blount. A large bonfire was built and all the villagers turned out to sing songs accompanied by an accordion. The children also had a party at school.