

Devon and the First World War

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Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences and impact of wartime mobilization in the county of Devon. It argues that a crucial role was played by the county's elites who became the self-appointed intermediaries of the war experience on a local level and who took an explicitly exhortative role, attempting to educate Devonians in the codes of ideal conduct in wartime. These armchair patriots, defined by the local commentator Stephen Reynolds as 'provincial patriots', superintended the patriotism of Devon's population, evaluating that patriotism against the strength of their own. Through a critical exploration of Reynolds' definition of Devon's elite as the police-men and women of patriotism, this thesis reveals the ambiguities, constraints and complexities surrounding mobilization and remobilization in Devon. The evidence from Devon reveals the autonomy of Devon's citizens as they attempted to navigate the different challenges of the war while they weighed-up individual and local interests against the competing requests that the 'provincial patriots' prescribed for them. In many cases, their responses to the appeals and prescriptions from Devon's elite were informed by what they considered to be an appropriate contribution to the war effort. Therefore, the choice to participate in the measures introduced in the name of war effort in Devon was not a binary one. A tension between individual survival and national survival in the county was apparent in the encounters between Devon's elite as agents of mobilization and the county's populace during the war. Through various campaigns of superintendence in order to police the patriotism of Devon's people, the 'provincial patriots' attempted to navigate through the terrain of these competing priorities and resolve this tension. In their endeavours to mobilize Devon's populace, the authority of Devon's elite was criticised and they faced constant negotiation between individual priorities and those of the nation. This analysis of the complexity of the Devonian

experience of the First World War is sceptical about the ‘total’ nature of the First World War because the war to some Devonians was not the pre-eminent issue and did not absorb all of the county’s efforts. Rather, a significant part of Devon’s population was primarily concerned with individual priorities and that of the county throughout the war years.

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List of Abbreviations

ABRC	Alphington Belgian Refugee Charity
AEC	Agricultural Executive Committee
APL	American Protective League
BAF	Board of Agriculture and Fisheries
BC	Board of Conservators
BT	Board of Trade
CDC	Civil Distress Committee
CO	Conscientious Objector
CoETSFITL	Church of England Temperance Society for Female Inebriates at Temple Lodge
CPA	Corn Production Act
DAT	Devon Appeal Tribunal
DCA	Devon County Asylum
DCC	Devon County Council
DCF	Diocesan Clergy Fund
DCHC	Devon County Horticulture Committee
DCWRC	Devon County War Refugees' Committee
DFU	Devon Farmers Union
DGPS	Devon Garden Produce Society
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre
DORA	Defence of the Realm Act
DPC	Dunkeswell Parish Council
DPF	Devon Patriotic Fund
DPRC	Devon Parliamentary Recruiting Committee

DRLC	Defence of the Realm Losses Commission
DSFC	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee
DWAC	Devon War Agricultural Committee
DWWSC	Devon Women's War Service Committee
EDC	Exmouth Dock Company
GWR	Great Western Railway
HO	Home Office
HM	His Majesty
HMS	His Majesty's Ship
HRDC	Honiton Rural District Council
ISWF	Inspector for the South West Fisheries
IUDC	Ilfracombe Urban District Council
IWM	Imperial War Museum
JHC	John Heathcoat & Company
LGB	Local Government Board
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
LSWR	London and South Western Railway
MCL	Men's Committee of Lacehands
MSA	Military Service Act
MSB	Military Service Bill
MST	Military Service Tribunals
NDRO	North Devon Record Office
NECW	National Egg Collection for the Wounded
NFU	National Farmers Union
NMRO	Navy and Marines Recruiting Office
NWAC	National War Aims Committee

PAT	Plymouth Appeal Tribunal
PWDRO	Plymouth and West Devon Record Office
POW	Prisoner Of War
PUDC	Paignton Urban District Council
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
RMS	Royal Mail Ship
TM	Tiverton Museum
TNA	The National Archives
UDC	Urban District Council
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment
VC	Victoria Cross
VTC	Volunteer Training Corps
WAC	War Aims Committee
WAPC	West Alvington Parish Council
WCA	War Charities Act
WLA	Women's Land Army
WO	War Office
WSA	War Savings Association
WTC	Women's Timber Corps

Introduction

This thesis examines the experiences and impact of wartime mobilization in the county of Devon. It argues that a crucial role was played by the county's elites who became the self-appointed intermediaries of the war experience on a local level and who took an explicitly exhortative role, attempting to educate Devonians in the codes of ideal conduct in wartime. The nature of the relationship in Devon from both above and below was in numerous instances a cause of friction as many Devonians placed individual priorities above obvious service to the nation. Hence, Devon's elite became more than solely intermediaries of the war experience but sought to undertake other activities in wartime. Through these actions, the local notables of the county became perceived as the 'provincial patriots' - the superintendents of patriotism. Their assorted campaigns of vigilance and superintendence in controlling the nature of what constituted patriotism across the county were met with varied degrees of success. They sought to educate and adjudicate the social morality of wartime throughout the administrative boundaries of Devon. Arguably, Devon's elite attempted to resolve the tension between individual priorities and nation ones. At the same time, it was clear to the county's local elite that some Devonians were hesitant and ambivalent towards such appeals for self-mobilization and remobilization. Between 1914 and 1918, the county's populace faced the continuing predicament throughout the war of how to engage with the escalating demands of the war effort. In fact, when faced with the continued exhortations for mobilization from Devon notable figures, many Devonians placed their own needs and those of their respective local communities above those of the nation.

Historiographies of the First World War

Jay Winter and Antoine Prost suggest that the historiography of civilian life during the First World War has developed significantly since the 1960s.¹ It now encompasses how the masses and classes of the belligerent populations engaged with the war effort, in conjunction with the emergence of various war cultures across the belligerents which provided the ideological understanding of and support for the war effort.² Through comparative analysis, the experiences of the British population from 1914 to 1918 have been positioned within a wider international context.³ These socio-cultural histories of the belligerent nations have analysed a number of different aspects of the civilian experience and reflected on the nature of wartime mobilization. Therefore, the historiography of the Home Fronts of the First World War has grown in an attempt to encompass the diversity and complexity of the wartime experiences of civilians across Europe. These include the support that the masses of the belligerent nations invested into the war effort, and how the efforts of various groups of civilians (e.g. farmers, fishermen, women and children) constituted the wartime Home Fronts.⁴

¹ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 152.

² *Ibid.*, John Williams, *The Home Fronts: Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1918* (London: Constable, 1972), Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), Jurgen Kocka, *Facing Total War: German Society, 1914-1918*, trans. by Barbara Weinberger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Providence: Berg, 1985), Bernard Waites, *A Class Society at War: England, 1914-18* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers Limited, 1987), John N. Horne, *Labour at war: France and Britain, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18: Understanding the Great War*, trans. by Catherine Temerson (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002).

³ Jay Winter, 'Recent Trends in the Historiography of Britain and the First World War: Cultural History, Comparative History, Public History' in H. Berghoff and R von Friedeburg eds., *Change and Inertia: Britain under the Impact of the Great War* (Bodenheim: Philo, 1998) pp. 94-97.

⁴ Arthur Marwick, *Women at War, 1914-1918* (London: Fontana, 1975), Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), Richard Wall and Jay Winter eds., *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Gail Braybon, *Women workers in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989), P. J. Flood, *France, 1914-18: Public Opinion and the War Effort* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1990), Patrick Fridenson ed., *The French Home Front, 1914-1918* (Providence: Berg, 1992), Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee eds., *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Oxford, Berghahn Books, 1995), Gerard J. DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1996), Ute Daniel, *The War from within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War*, trans. by Margaret Ries (Oxford: Berg, 1997), John Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge

Another important shift in the flourishing historiography of the civilian experience of the Great War is the consideration of the processes of mobilization. John Horne defines and explores mobilization as the ‘engagement of the different belligerent nations in their war efforts both imaginatively, through collective representations and the belief and value systems giving rise to these, and organizationally, through the state and civil society’.⁵ Thus, the mobilization of the belligerent nations was ‘an essentially political and cultural process’.⁶ The mobilization efforts and work of civilians in these societies constituted ‘a front (albeit a secondary one) that supported or complemented the [military] front’.⁷ The secondary front that emerged in the belligerent nations became defined as the ‘Home Front’. According to Pierre Purseigle, the word ‘home front’ first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1917.⁸ He argues that the ‘emergence of the notion of “home front” ... merely illustrated the acceleration of an ongoing process that the Second World War was to radicalize’.⁹ In the German language, Celia Applegate suggests that the term of *Heimat* (Home or Homeland) in many instances

University Press, 1997), Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War I* (London: I. B Tauris, 1998), Susan R. Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), Nicoletta F. Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), David Bilton, *The Home Front in the Great War: Aspects of the conflict, 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2003) pp. 195-201, Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 211-299, Rebecca Gill, ‘Calculating Compassion in War: The “New Humanitarian” Ethos in Britain, 1870-1918’, University of Manchester, PhD Thesis, 2005, Rosalind Joan Sarah Kennedy, ‘The Children’s War: British children’s experience of the Great War’, PhD Thesis, University of London, 2006, David Parker, *Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007), Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵ John Horne, ‘Introduction: mobilizing for “total war”, 1914-1918’ in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 5.

⁸ Pierre Purseigle, ‘Violence and solidarity. Urban experiences of the First World War’, 27 September 2012, <<http://www.pierrepurseigle.info/violence-and-solidarity-urban-experiences-of-the-first-world-war>> [Accessed 20 February 2013]

⁹ *Ibid.*

during the war became a ‘counterweight necessary to the balance the new concept – and place: the front’.¹⁰ Yet, Purseigle references Alexander Seyferth’s study of the wars of German unification which emphasizes that ‘the Franco-Prussian war in particular’ had meant that the word *Heimatfront* (Home Front) was given a ‘wide currency in the newly unified Germany’.¹¹ Equally, despite the evocation of home as an emotional counterbalance to the military front, Susan R. Grayzel indicates that in Britain and France whilst the First World War had ‘created the concept of the “Home Front,”’ the conflict did not stabilize the boundaries that separated the ‘war from home’.¹² Indeed, Maureen Healy points out that in all of these terms which describe the civilian front of the First World War, there was an assumption that the ‘violence of war was located someplace else other than “home”’.¹³

For Purseigle, the meaning of wartime mobilization ‘shifted from its original military definition to encompass the contribution of civil society, whose resources were also expected to directly support the armed forces in the field’.¹⁴ Additionally, Horne suggests that Britain, France and Germany appear to ‘share a common pattern of national mobilization in which the first two years of the war were strongly characterized by persuasion rather than coercion, and by a high degree of “self-mobilization” in civil society’.¹⁵ However, it is clear that despite the successes of the languages of national mobilization which encouraged individuals to engage in the activities and processes which constituted self-mobilization. At the same time, they can through the powerful

¹⁰ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) p. 115.

¹¹ Purseigle, ‘Violence and solidarity’, Alexander Seyferth, *Die Heimatfront 1870/71. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im deutsch-französischen Krieg* (Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 2007).

¹² Susan R. Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999) p. 7.

¹³ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 5.

¹⁴ Purseigle, ‘Violence and solidarity’.

¹⁵ Horne, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.

agents of class and nation unintentionally create vocabularies of counter mobilization.¹⁶ Similarly, Winter notes that class-consciousness was an important factor in the mobilization process because industrial conflict during the war revealed that patriotism itself was a contested term.¹⁷ Whereas, Healy is sceptical about the success of mobilization in Vienna during the war because in the city there were ‘no mechanisms by which to call up “society,” no institutions (such as the military) to impose order and discipline on the process, no hierarchical means of resolving conflicts that arose when an ethnically, religiously, and socio-economically heterogeneous population was asked to cooperate in a cause larger than itself’.¹⁸ Consequently, Healy suggests that the outcome of the attempts which constituted this ‘so-called mobilization of Vienna was communal disintegration’.¹⁹

At the same time, the historiography of the First World War has witnessed an expansion of comparative studies which have broadened the consideration of war experiences across the globe and analysed the conflict as a trans-national phenomenon.²⁰ Hew Strachan asserts that within three months after the declaration of war, the third Balkan war was transformed through the mobilization of European powers and their global empires to the extent that it ‘embroiled the bulk of the world’s three most populous continents, Europe, Africa, and Asia’.²¹ Recent studies have sought to appraise the historical understanding of the conflict with the wider experiences of a trans-national world war and to comprehend the conflict beyond the contours established in the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ Jay Winter, ‘Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919: capital cities at war’ in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 17.

¹⁸ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁰ Pierre Purseigle, ‘Introduction, Warfare and Belligerence: Approaches to the First World War’ in P. Purseigle ed., *Warfare and Belligerence: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Lieden: Brill, 2005), p. 3.

²¹ Hew Strachan, *The First World War: Volume 1, To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 1114, Hew Strachan, ‘The First World War as a global war’, *First World War Studies*, Vol. 1, 1 (March 2010) pp. 3-14.

traditional historiography.²² It can be ventured that the emergence of this more inclusive trans-national historiography of the Great War helps to present a global perspective of the conflict. Indeed, the studies which scrutinise the First World War's global dimensions can be considered as examples of macro-history. Rather than focus a history within the boundaries of the nation state, macro-history is the study of larger administrative frameworks such as the British Empire. The approach of macro-history towards the study of world history intends to discover the 'threads that link peoples, times and cultures together'.²³ Across the globe, the wartime experiences of mobilization and sacrifice were two such threads that connected indigenous and colonised populations of the European Empires across during the Great War.²⁴

Concurrently, these developments have been supplemented by examinations which venture beyond and below the administrative framework of the nation state to scrutinise the wartime experiences of specific localities. The histories of localities such as London,

²² Hubertus F. Jahn, *Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), Tan Tai-Young, 'An Imperial Home-Front: Punjab and the First World War', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 64, 2 (April 2000) pp. 371-410, Keith Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta eds., *Ireland and the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), Olivier Compagnon, '1914-18: The Death Throes of Civilization. The Elites of Latin-America Face the Great War' in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) pp. 279-295, Peter Gatrell, *Russia's First World War: A Social and Economic History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), Xu Guoqi, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), John Crawford and Ian McGibbon eds., *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland, NZ: Exisle, 2007), Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), Xu Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Eric Lohr, 'Russia' in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 479-493, Adrian Gregory, 'Britain and Ireland' in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 403-417, Phillip Payton, *Regional Australia and the Great War: 'the boys from Old Kio'* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2012)

²³ Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 2nd edn (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006) p. 186.

²⁴ John H. Morrow, *The Great War: An Imperial History* (New York: Routledge, 2004), Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race, masculinity and the development of national consciousness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), Gordon Corrigan, *Sepoys in the Trenches: The Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914-15* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2006), Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Robert Aldrich and Christopher Hilliard, 'The French and British Empires' in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 524-539.

Paris, Berlin, Béziers and Northampton challenge and redress the analytical focus in the historiography of the Home Fronts of the First World War which have, typically, concentrated on the analytical framework of the nation state.²⁵ In fact, Winter suggests that to ‘penetrate behind the illusory veil of a unitary “national experience”’ is to describe the character of community life in wartime.²⁶ Accordingly, Keith Grieves proposes that these local histories comprise a ‘new’ cultural history of the Great War in that it is informed from below because there is a greater ‘emphasis on the effects of war on local communities in their distinctive settings’.²⁷ These studies of the everyday wartime experiences in individual locations such as a hamlet, village, town or city during the Great War are also instances of microhistory. According to Giovanni Levi, microhistory is principally ‘based on the reduction of scale of observation, on a microscopic analysis and an intensive study of the documentary material’.²⁸ Based upon this directive, microhistory studies are undertaken with the conviction that detailed observation and analysis will ‘uncover unknown complexities and reveal “new meanings” in structures, processes, belief systems and human interaction’.²⁹ It is important to note how historians have employed a variety of approaches in their study

²⁵ Jay Winter, ‘Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919: capital cities at war’, in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 3-24, Jean-Louis Robert and Jay Winter, ‘Conclusions: towards a social history of capital cities at war’ in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 527-554, Pierre Purseigle, ‘Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War’ in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) pp. 95-123, Stefan Goebel, ‘Forging The Industrial Home Front: Iron-Nail Memorials in the Ruhr’ in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) pp. 159-178, Jay Winter, ‘The practices of metropolitan life in wartime’ in J. Winter and J-L Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 1-20, Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, ‘Conclusion’ in J. Winter and J-L Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 468-481

²⁶ Winter, ‘Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919’, p. 3.

²⁷ Keith Grieves, ‘The quiet of the country and the restless excitement of the towns: rural perspectives on the home front, 1914-1918’ in M. Tebbutt ed., *Rural and Urban Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (Manchester: Conference of Regional and Local Historians, 2004) p. 80.

²⁸ Giovanni Levi, ‘On Microhistory’, in P. Burke ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) p. 99.

²⁹ Barry Reay, *Microhistories: demography, society and culture in rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 260.

of the local and regional experiences of the war.³⁰ One example of this is Mark Connolly's investigation of the county of Kent through the study of not only Kent's regiment, known as the Buffs, but also of the region's communities from which the soldiers had volunteered.³¹ Microhistories in their respective microscopic analytical frames of reference also entail a scrutiny of other themes including the 'attention to reception and narrative, a specific definition of context and the rejection of relativism'.³² Consequently, microhistories do not 'sacrifice knowledge of individual elements to wider generalization ... [but also] ... accentuate(s) individual lives and events'.³³

It could be suggested that since these works of microhistory are aware of the complexity of the local context, they also have the opportunity to provide a comprehensive picture of local life. Roger Chickering proclaimed that his study of the German city of Freiburg is a response to the legitimate intention that the study of total war requires total history.³⁴ However, Chickering reveals that it is important to be aware of the practical and methodological challenges in the daunting attempt to provide a total history.³⁵ Nonetheless, despite the limitations of microhistories, it is valid to argue that these examinations of individual localities have made significant contributions as the 'local is the site for exploring significant social change and for teasing out important historiographical issues'.³⁶ McCartney suggests that it is undeniably significant for historians to consider Britain on a local level because in 1914 'the horizons of her

³⁰ Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorial's in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), David Parker, *Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007) Catriona Pennell, "The Germans Have Landed!": Invasion Fears in the South-East of England, August to December 1914' in H. Jones, J. O'Brien, C. Schmidt-Suprian eds., *Untold War: New perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) pp. 95-116.

³¹ Mark Connolly, *Steady the Buffs! A Regiment, a Region, and the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

³² Levi, 'On Microhistory', p. 113.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³⁴ Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-10.

³⁶ Reay, *Microhistories*, p. 260.

citizens were profoundly local'.³⁷ This meant that city, town, rural, urban and parish communities within the administrative framework and construct of a county felt a distinct sense of attachment to their respective local settings.³⁸ This is true of Devon as there were individuals who did feel a distinct sense of attachment to the characteristic landscapes of their localities.³⁹ One example of this from Devon was the attachment of some Devonians to the fertile 'Red Soil', otherwise known as the red earth, present in some districts of the county. Moreover, local history (the heroism of Sir Francis Drake) and folklore (the legend of Drake's drum) became evoked alongside local landscapes in narratives of local county exceptionalism in a bid to integrate local identities in the processes of mobilization and to stimulate both local patriotism and a county identity in Devon.⁴⁰

By 1914, local identity possessed a continued significance and microhistories have revealed the pertinence of local identities against the forces of modernisation and centralisation in the belligerent nations.⁴¹ Winter suggested that for individuals who lived in specific localities, their notion of 'England' was 'envisioned as a very local and

³⁷ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, p. 3.

³⁸ Winter, 'Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919', pp. 3-24., Catherine Brace, 'Finding England Everywhere: Regional Identity and the Construction of National Identity, 1890-1940', *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 6, 1 (January 1999), pp. 90-109, K. D. M. Smith, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³⁹ Robin Stanes, *A History of Devon* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 1986) pp. 14-16,

⁴⁰ 'Captain William Pillar: A Devon Hero' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1916* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1916) pp. 23, Henry Newbolt, 'Drake's Drum' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1916* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1916) p. 51, 'A Tribute to Drake: The Significance of Drake's Drum' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1917* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1917) pp. 19-24, Alfred Noyes, 'The Admiral's Ghost' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1917* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1917) pp. 24-26, Henry Newbolt, 'April on Waggon Hill' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1918* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1918) p. 35, Dudley Clark, 'Eastward Ho!' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1918* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1918) pp. 53-54, Percy Hazelden, 'Devon Men' in W. B. D. Henderson ed., *Poems from Punch, 1909-1920* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1922) pp. 144-146, Dudley Clark, 'For Dartymoor' in W. B. D. Henderson ed., *Poems from Punch, 1909-1920* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1922) pp. 141-142.

⁴¹ Pierre Purseigle, "“Wither the Local?” Nationalization, Modernization, and the Mobilization of Urban Communities in England and France, c. 1900-18" in W. Whyte and O. Zimmer eds., *Nationalism and the reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 187, Alon Cofino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, Townsley, 'The First World War and Voluntary Recruitment'.

particular place, bounded in many cases by the streets they knew, and the daily lives they led'.⁴² Accordingly, Winter points out that 'identity is local in character ... [and] ... Metropolitan identities rested on a sense of place'.⁴³ This strong association with local landscapes, local identity and local patriotism is also true of Devon. Some contemporaries presented Devon as an evocation of an idealised England in which many Devonians envisioned the county, with Devon's distinctive settings, as their England. It is clear that the distinctive features of local landscapes on a county level were used in the construct and expression of a county identity.⁴⁴ Similarly, in Germany, the idea of *Heimat* (Home) was defined on a local level because it was a 'fundamental vehicle for internalizing the impersonal nation by placing it within the familiar local world'.⁴⁵ The distinctiveness of local identity in Devon during the war will be discussed in this thesis. Yet, the attachment of a local sense of belonging became part of a collective imagined national community and how individuals defined the nation within the context of a specific local setting.⁴⁶ Therefore, in this microhistory of Devon during the First World War, it is vital to understand the importance of locality, local identity and local patriotism because they were all integral features in the discourses and rhetoric of the county's elite to encourage Devonians to participate in the processes of mobilization.

In light of the particularity and perspectives offered by local evidence, microhistory examinations can provide an enquiry and a new reflection to larger historiographical issues of the Home Fronts of the belligerent nations during the Great War. These local

⁴² Winter, 'Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919', p. 7, Jay Winter 'Popular culture in wartime Britain' in A. Roshwald and R. Stites eds., *European culture in the Great War: The arts, entertainment, and propaganda, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 331.

⁴³ Jay Winter, 'The practices of metropolitan life in wartime' in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 3.

⁴⁴ Helen Townsley, 'The First World War and Voluntary Recruitment: A forum for regional identity? An analysis of the nature, expression and significance of regional identity in Hull, 1900 -1916', University of Sussex, PhD thesis, 2008.

⁴⁵ Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, p. 9.

⁴⁶ Winter, 'Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919', p. 16.

studies seek to explore the nature of the solidarities, discrimination and the processes of mobilisation at work between 1914 and 1918, and uncover the relationships that were established in specific localities between the military's requirements and the needs of civilians.⁴⁷ Two examples of this critical assessment of local societies in wartime can be found in both volumes of the *Capital Cities at War*. These two studies have presented an unprecedented critical assessment of various aspects of urban life in London, Paris and Berlin from 1914 to 1918.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the microhistories of everyday life in the Great War have revealed how individuals in particular localities adapted physically, mentally and emotionally to the circumstances of wartime. Ultimately, these microhistory examinations of the First World War have reinforced the importance of locality, localism and local identity.

The majority of the microhistory examinations of the Great War have mostly focused their analysis on urban localities and the experiences of mobilization in urban settings.⁴⁹ There are exceptions to this rule for Britain and the United States.⁵⁰ Additionally, there are a number of studies which have centred their analysis on the experiences of rural

⁴⁷ Pierre Purseigle and Jenny MacLeod, 'Introduction: Perspectives in First World War Studies', in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) p. 14.

⁴⁸ Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

⁴⁹ Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Winter and Robert, *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919*, Winter and Robert, *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History*, Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below the Nations', pp. 95-123, Purseigle, "Wither the Local?", pp. 182-203, Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany, Freiburg, 1914-1918*.

⁵⁰ Horn, *Rural Life in England in the First World War*, P. E. Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989), Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History, 1850-1925* (London: Routledge, 1992), Alun Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A social history of the countryside since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003), Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Germany during the First World War.⁵¹ Indeed, Chickering gives some insight into the relationship between Freiburg's urban communities and the rural communities surrounding the city.⁵² Nonetheless, it is still the case that the experiences of rural communities have been largely overshadowed by the growth of histories which consider the urban societies during wartime. Grieves has advocated the examination of the rural Home Front during the Great War as a counterpoint to these urban examinations. In his view, the persistence of 'local distinctiveness of the form and fabric of settlements and their context mattered' because it is clear that the 'proximity to, and remoteness from, "nerve centres" was a significant variable'.⁵³ The reason for this is that the patterns of 'self-mobilization, supply, resilience and protest were affected by the relational perceptions of town and country in wartime'.⁵⁴ In fact, despite the importance of rural communities to the war effort, many writers in rural communities during the war 'periodically expressed a peripheral, rather than core, relationship to the decisions and events in wartime Britain'.⁵⁵ Accordingly, there is a sharp contrast noted in these writers accounts between the attention that they give to the 'otherness' of rural society during the war and the illuminated changes and developments that they witnessed taking place in their visits to the towns.⁵⁶ Likewise, Benjamin Ziemann has noted in his analysis of rural Bavaria that there was a perceived 'civilizational distinction' between town and country as peasants experienced stigmatisation by urban populations.⁵⁷ However, the experiences of wartime had meant that urban communities had to court the favour of

⁵¹ Robert G. Moeller, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914-1924: The Rhineland and Westphalia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), Simon Constantine, *Social Relations in the Estate Villages of Mecklenburg, c. 1880-1924* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), Benjamin Ziemann, *War experiences in rural Germany, 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007), Elizabeth B. Jones, *Gender and Rural Modernity: Farm Women and the Politics of Labor in Germany, 1871-1933* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁵² Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany, Freiburg, 1914-1918*, pp. 38, 161, 166, 168, 176, 179-188, 244, 246, 248, 249, 498.

⁵³ Grieves, 'The quiet of the country and the restless excitement of the towns', p. 94.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Ziemann, *War experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923*, p. 195

farmers and peasantry for food supplies. Nonetheless, Ziemann shows that this stigmatisation left some peasants embittered and resentful against city dwellers ‘as a result of their civilisational backwardness of their working lives and life-world’.⁵⁸

Yet, Grieves has stressed that the notion of sacrifice did not ‘demarcate country from town on the home front’.⁵⁹ The experiences of ‘emergent total war on the home front were not complete and universal that one monolithic historical narrative can serve the nuances of differences, which inhabited contemporary “lived” representations of the nation at war’.⁶⁰ Accordingly, local societies are not necessarily a precise miniature reflection of a national society in wartime. During the war, Grieves stresses that ‘different social and physical worlds were inhabited, whose effects need fuller treatment in the literature of the home front, especially from rural perspectives’.⁶¹ Due to the fact that the British nation state was not a monolithic structure and the experiences of wartime varied across the United Kingdom, Grieves proposes that further ‘histories of local and regional communities in wartime are necessary’.⁶² Furthermore, Winter and Prost reinforce the validity of rural studies because they stress that ‘there was a different coloration to wartime culture in its rural setting than its urban setting’.⁶³ Equally, just as the studies of urban localities in wartime were a challenge to the histories of Home Fronts using the framework of the nation state, the analytical balance needs to consider the wartime experiences of both rural and urban communities in a regional setting.

Across the United Kingdom, rural and urban populations shared the ‘experiences of mobilisation and regulation, endurance and exhaustion, destruction and dislocation, and

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁵⁹ Grieves, ‘The quiet of the country and the restless excitement of the towns’, p. 93.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, p. 165.

sacrifice and mourning'.⁶⁴ The examination of various different settlement types across the rich and diverse socio-economic fabric within an administrative unit such as a county provides the historian with an opportunity to cross-reference and develop the research advanced in the historiographies of the Home Fronts in urban and rural localities. Rather than solely examine rural or urban localities in isolation, a study within a county can provide an opportunity to examine the interdependence and relationship between rural and urban localities. These regional studies create a balanced critical assessment on the diverse nature of the experiences of wartime. Microhistories of particular counties during the war are part of this shift towards a balanced critical analysis of rural and urban communities.⁶⁵ Previously, the county of Devon during 1914 to 1918 has been examined by Bonnie White.⁶⁶

Specifically, White has investigated the Home Front in Devon through an assessment of the themes of state intervention, agriculture, recruitment efforts and denominational responses to the war. Based upon her research, she suggests that the support of Devon's population in the British war effort was 'provisional and based on the perception of "equality of sacrifice"'.⁶⁷ This was, in White's definition, the 'expectation that the burdens of war would be shared equally throughout the county and across all elements of society'.⁶⁸ Accordingly, Devonians across the county were generally willing to

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁵ Gerald Gliddon ed., *Norfolk & Suffolk in the Great War* (Norwich: Gliddon Books, 1988), W. A. Armstrong, 'Kentish Rural Society during the First World War' in B. A. Holdness and M. Turner eds., *Land, Labour and Agriculture, 1790-1920: Essays for Gordon Mingray* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991) pp. 109-131, Keith Grieves, *Sussex in the First World War* (Lewes: Sussex Record Office, 2004), Parker, *Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939*, Paul Rusiecki, *The Impact of Catastrophe: The people of Essex and the First World War (1914-1918)* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 2008)

⁶⁶ Bonnie White, 'War and the Home Front: Devon in the First World War', McMaster University, PhD thesis, 2008, Bonnie J. White, 'Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 - December 1915', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 52, 3 (2009) pp. 641-666, Bonnie White, 'Feeding the war effort: agricultural experiences in First World War Devon, 1914-1917', *Agricultural History Review* Vol. 58, Part I (2010) pp. 95-112, Bonnie White 'Sowing the seeds of patriotism? The Women's Land Army in Devon, 1916-1918', *The Local Historian* Vol. 41, 1 (February 2011) pp. 13-27.

⁶⁷ White, 'War and the Home Front', p. iii.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

accept the sacrifices introduced in wartime on the condition that these sacrifices were part of a ubiquitous and equally assigned system of sacrifices.⁶⁹ At the same time, White asserts that the war had aggravated rural and urban tensions in the county which ‘highlighted the social and economic divisions that characterized relations between the communities of northern and southern Devon, and led to frequent and public criticisms of the government’s management of the war’.⁷⁰ It is evident that her thesis on Devon during 1914 to 1918 has made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the experiences of the Great War in the South West.⁷¹

In the light of existing microhistories of counties during the conflict and previous examinations of Devon from 1914 to 1918, how will this thesis of Devon during the First World War sit in relation to these other county studies and differentiate itself from White’s research? This thesis reveals that there remains much more to be said about the Devonian experience during the war. It is argued here that White’s claim surrounding the ‘equality of sacrifice’ does not allow for the substantial regional differences inside Devon. There is evidence from Devon which stresses that there were Devonians who were hesitant to accept sacrifices in the name of the war effort and were more concerned with their own survival. This is particularly pertinent in the areas and sources that have been analysed in this thesis and which she has not examined in her work. The records relating to Devon’s holiday industry from 1914 to 1918 and the subject of Devon’s fishing industry during the Great War are two such areas that reveal how the survival of their respective industries was of the utmost importance. The effectiveness of Devon’s elite to administer upon the way in which the county’s residents understood the war and its sacrifices were not universally successful. The prevalence of individual priorities in

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

the responses from Devonians towards the calls for sacrifice, strengthens the idea that the war effort was not a unifying principle. It is also the case that there needs to be further scrutiny of the effectiveness of how the notion of the sacrifice was enforced on a local level across Devon. Therefore, this thesis provides a sustained analysis of the role of Devon's elites during the war. Yet, the analysis presented here is not solely an examination of the wartime experiences of Devon's elites. Instead, the study of Devon's elite offers a critical reflection between the county's population and Devon's elites. Indeed, the scope of the critical investigation presented here brings forward a sceptical light to the influence and effectiveness of Devon's elites on the intermediation of the wartime behaviour of the county's population. Hence, this is a new perspective and interpretation of the Devonian experience of the First World War as it emphasizes the complexity of the war years for both Devon's elite and the county's population.

It could also be argued that White's research does not provide a complete picture of the Devonian experience of the Great War. This thesis takes into account the interactions of Devon's elite with the county's population and vice-versa to produce a more comprehensive survey of the effectiveness of mobilization on a local level within Devon. Grieves has argued that the relationship between local affinity and national purpose is in need of more detailed enquiry.⁷² This will be achieved with a more comprehensive analysis of the processes of mobilization in Devon during the First World War and through a deeper consideration of the relationship between Devon's elite and the county's population during the conflict. Through a sustained analysis of the key role of Devon's elite in wartime, this thesis will produce a more detailed enquiry exploring how the county's populace attempted to balance local priorities with national ones from 1914 to 1918. Therefore, this study of Devon during the First World War will

⁷² Grieves, *Sussex in the First World War*, p. xiii.

provide a more detailed insight into the relationship between local affinity and national purpose. As the fourth largest county of England, this examination of the experiences and impact of wartime mobilization in Devon makes an important contribution to deepening the understanding of the effectiveness and constraints of mobilization between the core and the periphery in Great Britain.

The local elite as the Intermediaries and Superintendents of the Home Front

Purseigle has suggested in his comparative examination of two small sized towns, Béziers in France and Northampton in Britain, that the ‘local elite was the critical group’.⁷³ The reason for this is that it was the local elite who reflected and shaped the mediation of the war experience on the Home Front at a local level.⁷⁴ In Devon, the evidence from the county’s archives and the local press reveals how Devon’s elite were also intermediaries of the war effort on a local level from which they shaped and mediated the war experience.⁷⁵ Notable figures such as Lord Fortescue and the Mayor of Exeter had existing roles in areas such as welfare and education in Devon. They held institutional posts within these organisations, which possessed differing degrees of autonomy and power. As members on the various wartime committees and organisations and responsibilities, Devon’s notables accepted and occupied new and different roles during wartime. This is confirmed in Peter Martin’s study of the wartime experiences of the Irish nobility. Martin proposes that the conflict had affected Ireland’s peers ‘indirectly through their involvement with the people of the locality’.⁷⁶ In fact, the participation of Ireland’s nobles in the various activities which comprised the war effort was a natural ‘extension of their traditional role as landlords and patrons of charitable

⁷³ Purseigle, ‘Beyond and Below the Nations’, p. 96.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Ralph Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918: Being a short account of the part played by Tavistock and Neighbourhood in the Great War* (Tavistock: Jolliffe & Son, 1919) p. 73.

⁷⁶ Peter Martin, ‘*Dulce et Decorum: Irish Nobles and the Great War, 1914-19*’ in A. Gregory and S. Pašeta eds., *Ireland and the Great War: ‘A war to unite us all?’* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) p. 37.

societies'.⁷⁷ Moreover, Martin suggests that their engagement with wartime initiatives may also 'indicate a popular belief that they retained some political influence with the administration in London or Dublin'.⁷⁸

The authority inherent in the role as an intermediary is also suggested by Belinda J. Davies in relation to Berlin's police force as well as other organisations and sites in the city which 'acted as intermediates between state and society on the eve of war'.⁷⁹ It should be noted that Germany's local elite who were members of local government entities such as 'provincial, metropolitan, municipal, and communal governments, too, acted as important mediums of exchange between the state and broader society, particularly through the parliament of cities (Städtetag), represented the nations urban strength'.⁸⁰ Despite the wartime growth of the apparatus and intervention of the state in both Britain and France, local civil society were not stripped of their mediating role.⁸¹ The same intermediary status could be said to apply to the voluntary associations and organisations that were part of the civil societies of the belligerent nations.⁸² On a local level, civil society was critically important in the processes of mobilization because the 'war cultures' were disseminated by local elites. Theda Skocpol, Ziad Munson, Andrew Karch, and Bayliss Camp have suggested that across the United States of America the 'local chapters of all kinds of voluntary membership federations became crucial nodes in war mobilization drives'.⁸³ The connection of these crucial nodes across the

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) p. 14.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸¹ Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below the Nations', p. 120

⁸² Frank Trentmann, 'Introduction: Paradoxes of Civil Society' in F. Trentmann ed., *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History*, 2nd edn (Providence: Berghahn Books, 2003) pp. 12–40, Frank Prochaska, *Schools of Citizenship: Charity and Civic Virtue* (London: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2002)

⁸³ Theda Skocpol, Theda, Ziad Munson, Andrew Karch and Bayliss Camp, 'Patriotic Partnerships: Why Great Wars Nourished American Civic Voluntarism' in I. Katzenbach and M. Shefter eds., *Shaped by War*

framework of the nation state was vital to achieve the widespread success of mobilization initiatives. In the case of the local elite, the effectiveness of the contribution that they could make in these various undertakings to intermediate the war experience on a local level was critical. According to Purseigle, the discourses and iconography of wartime that are evident in the materials produced by ‘civic authorities, newspapers and voluntary organizations show how local elites used the main symbols of local identity to stress that victory would belong to the urban community as well as to the nation’.⁸⁴

In the case of the Tsarist war effort, Peter Gatrell suggests that Russia’s rural ‘landed elite could not be counted upon to underpin an effective propaganda offensive in the countryside’.⁸⁵ According to Gatrell, Russia’s landowners perceived that the war was a time of trial and Russia’s commercial middle class were divided because the ‘regional and ethnic differences remained too deeply entrenched’.⁸⁶ The fact that Russia’s rural elite were ineffective intermediaries of the war experience undermined their efforts to convince Russia’s rural populace to mobilize for war. Therefore, the effectiveness of the local elite as intermediaries in their localities was instrumental to gain the support of their respective local communities in the war effort. Consequently, Purseigle advocates that the historian should study the experiences of the members of the local elite because a critical inquiry of them ‘enables the historian to deal comprehensively with both the local commitment to the national mobilization and the mental imagery which allowed the transcendence of the war experience’.⁸⁷

and Trade: International Influences on American Political Development (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) p. 163.

⁸⁴ Purseigle, ‘Violence and solidarity’.

⁸⁵ Gatrell, *Russia’s First World War*, p. 56.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Purseigle, ‘Beyond and Below the Nations’, p. 96.

At the same time, Horne suggests that there existed a more negative ‘Home Front’ in the minds of contemporaries which consisted of ‘shirkers, profiteers and armchair patriots’.⁸⁸ The Inspector for the South West Fisheries during the war, Stephen Reynolds touched upon this negative Home Front when he commented on the nature of Devon’s local elite. In a letter to civil servant Henry Maurice dated 8 December 1917, Reynolds defined the individuals who were members of Devon’s civil society as the ‘provincial patriots whose patriotism, while they are on the safe side of military age, consists in superintending the patriotism of those aren’t [exempt from military service]’.⁸⁹ This satirical description of these individuals as the self-appointed superintendents of patriotism is intriguing because it invokes connotations that the ‘provincial patriots’ were in fact ‘armchair patriots’. The expression implies that these ‘patriots’ who sat in relative comfort of their armchairs were self-appointed figures of authority but they were also individuals who were negatively characterised as inexperienced, judgmental and hypocritical. Devon’s ‘provincial patriots’ were similar to the American Protective League (APL) which was a vigilance organisation comprising ‘professional men, typically above draft age or otherwise exempt’.⁹⁰ The volunteers of this group were dedicated in their vigilance of the American Home Front and claimed to possess a jurisdiction in regulating the wartime behaviour of American citizens. However, these volunteers were citizens who participated in the vigilance of citizens in the attempt to enforce 100 per cent Americanism which included ‘investigations of the character and loyalty of citizens and aliens, the circulation of seditious material’.⁹¹ In fact, Capozzola emphasizes that ‘vigilance organizations gained force and authority as they spoke in the name of the wartime state, but their new

⁸⁸ John Horne, ‘Soldiers, Civilians and the Warfare of Attrition: Representations of Combat in France, 1914-1918’ in F. Coetzee and M. Shevin-Coetzee eds., *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995) p. 224.

⁸⁹ Stephen Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. by Harold Wright (Richmond: Hogarth press, 1923) p. 291.

⁹⁰ Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, p. 42.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

position also exposed them to criticism by those who denied their legitimacy'.⁹²

Similarly, it could be argued that Devon's notables, as arbitrators of the war experience, conducted campaigns of superintendence of the loyalty and patriotism of Devonians across the county.

Edward Madigan suggests that the role of the British clergy was as self-appointed moral arbiters in wartime British society and that this was reflected in the wartime rhetoric that they used in their commentaries.⁹³ An example of this in Devon is from Reynolds who described the vicar of the East Devon town of Sidmouth as an *unco guid*.⁹⁴ This Scottish derogatory term refers to an individual who is a narrow-minded, excessively and 'professedly strict in matters of morals and religion'.⁹⁵ Reynolds observed that this rigidly self-righteous reverend was 'kicking up a moralistic dust, and making a fuss over maidens and soldiers, and things hard for girls who get into trouble'.⁹⁶ This commentary reveals the fears that this clergyman expressed concerning the phenomenon of khaki fever. Khaki fever was the fear of young women's sexual behaviour where they would become so entranced by men in military uniform to the extent that they would 'behave in immodest and even dangerous ways'.⁹⁷ Angela Woollacott argues that the discourse surrounding khaki fever was 'conducted by military and police authorities, feminists, other reformers and social commentators showed the first world war as a climactic time of concern about young women's social and sexual behaviour'.⁹⁸ The concerns over women's behaviour 'sparked a movement to control the sexual behaviour

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 121

⁹³ Edward Madigan, 'Morality in Wartime Britain', <<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/morality-wartime-britain-video>> [Accessed 14 January 2013].

⁹⁴ Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 200.

⁹⁵ Elizabeth Knowles, 'the unco guid', *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 749.

⁹⁶ Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 200.

⁹⁷ Angela Woollacott, '"Khaki Fever" and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 29, 2 (April 1994) p. 325.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

of young women which became a feature of life on the homefront'.⁹⁹ These attempts to control the patriotic behaviour of women were enacted by self-appointed individuals and entities which included the Women's Police Service, Bishops, politicians and social reformers.¹⁰⁰ In Devon, Lord Fortescue wrote to his deputy, Sir William Acland on 28 October 1914, to convey his concerns about the sexual behaviour of some women in Exeter. Fortescue revealed that Exeter's High Street was like Piccadilly Circus because 'every loose woman in the town is placing herself gratis of any man in uniform'.¹⁰¹ Fortescue's moral consternation meant that he expressed his hope to Acland that 'rescue workers and "other good women" would be able to direct these women back onto a moral path'.¹⁰² However, it can be ventured that this surveillance and policing of the social morality of wartime extended beyond the behaviour of women to encompass all members of Devon's communities.

The members of Devon's civil society attempted to enforce this social morality of wartime, and monitor and control the discourses of patriotism. Their status as self-appointed figures of civil society gave them another avenue by which they could attempt to police the patriotism of others and use their position to exert their influence. Purseigle suggests that civil society in the belligerent nations through various activities 'contributed to the monitoring and censoring of public opinion'.¹⁰³ He also references the perspective of civil society put forward by Antonio Gramsci in that civil society operated with a semi-autonomous *modus-operandi*. Through various behaviours and means, civil society was able to exert a collective pressure to instigate an 'evolution of

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 329, 331, 333, Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, pp. 123-156.

¹⁰¹ DHC: 1262M/L129, Lord Lieutenant's Papers, 1881-1928, 28 October 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 82.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Purseigle, 'Introduction, Warfare and Belligerence', p. 25.

customs, ways of thinking and acting, morality, etc'.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Purseigle proposes that historians adapt Gramsci's perspective on how civil society operates on a local level because it may 'beneficially inform our analysis of belligerence in the First World War, insofar as it stresses both the autonomy of social agents and their position within systems of domination'.¹⁰⁵ In Devon, the local elite were agents who broadcasted, reflected upon, and policed the nature of sacrifice and the social morality of wartime in the county. However, this should not be understood in a conspiratorial context because the ability of the 'provincial patriots' to mediate and convince was not universally effective. Purseigle points out that to adopt Gramsci's perspective on civil society above all suggests that the ““war cultures” most forcefully articulated by the elites were neither uncritically endorsed by the masses, nor merely imposed from above through the state ideological apparatus'.¹⁰⁶ As Winter suggests, when 'common sense on the popular level diverged from state propaganda, the official message turned hollow or simply vanished'.¹⁰⁷ It would, therefore, be wrong to imagine that the 'provincial patriots' were always an effective and cohesive group because, to enforce this social morality in the county it was dependent on the efforts of individual members of Devon's civil society. Moreover, it is clear based on the evidence from Devon that there were also women who undertook this superintendence of patriotism.

Horne proposes that the war also 'generated a specifically wartime "social morality" – or set of reciprocal moral judgements on the contributions of different groups to the national effort'.¹⁰⁸ The framework of meaning inherent in this social morality of wartime was evident in both urban and rural communities as the notions of 'shirker' and

¹⁰⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 2007) p. 242.

¹⁰⁵ Purseigle, 'Introduction, Warfare and Belligerence', p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ J. M. Winter, 'Propaganda and the Mobilization of Consent' in H. Strachan ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) p. 217.

¹⁰⁸ Horne, 'Introduction', p. 11.

‘profiteer’ tapped into the immoral characteristics of greed and selfishness: ‘It was not just that urban consumers rediscovered the “ever increasing greed of the merchants and the rural producers” but that this apparent greed directly contravened the equality of sacrifice, and thus the uniform moral yardstick of civilian action in relation to the war’.¹⁰⁹ Devon’s elite attempted to police this moral yardstick of civilian action on a local level. This microhistory examination of Devon will further our understanding of the role of the county’s elite as the police-men and women of patriotism in wartime. In their exhortations disseminated through various formal and informal channels, i.e. the local press, speeches and meetings, they sought to control the ways to which the themes of sacrifice and patriotism were understood. They attempted to enforce the social morality of wartime in Devon. Horne suggests the propaganda campaign in France was a ‘paradigm of the effort by the state and social élites to translate an idealised civilian identity into action, with committees of local notables seeking to stump up subscriptions’.¹¹⁰ Similar patterns can be seen in Devon and the United Kingdom more generally.

There were some of Devon’s elite who did attempt to police the patriotism of Devonians but their efforts were the subject of criticism and hostility. As social changes of wartime took place in Devon as a consequence of the processes of mobilization it became clear that not only did it dissolve the barriers of what constituted civilians and combatants, there was also a blurring of authority and jurisdiction. Similar tensions were expressed by Vienna’s population towards the role and authority of the city’s Police in wartime.¹¹¹ Devon’s elite had to continually negotiate and navigate through the ambiguity in some responses from Devonians towards the appeals for mobilization

¹⁰⁹ John Horne, ‘Social Identity in War: France, 1914-1918’ in T. G. Fraser and K. Jeffrey eds., *Men, Women and War* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1993) p. 130.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹¹¹ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, pp. 79-80.

and the tension between individual priorities and national ones. This was further complicated by the differences in that some of the responsibilities and roles that Devon's elite held in wartime possessed the authority and power over life or death. For example, the notables who comprised Devon's tribunal panels in effect possessed the power of life and death over Devon's men-folk in their respective localities. In addition, as intermediaries of wartime committees, Devon's elite also possessed a distinct agency in wartime to which they possessed an exhorting role. It was intended that these roles would enhance the effectiveness of their policing of patriotism and wartime behaviour on a local level. The idea that Devon's elite possessed an explicitly exhortative role fits into the proposal established in this thesis that they were self-appointed arbiters and superintendents of the social morality of wartime.

Accordingly, the critical exploration of the local elite in Devon will allow this thesis to provide additional depth of analysis on the sometimes frictional relationship between Devon's elite and the county's populace. This will, therefore, clarify the degree to which the county's residents were expected to behave towards the aspirations of ideal civilian codes of conduct which were promoted by the local notables and the ways they behaved in response to their appeals. It was noted that Sir James Owen, the Mayor of Exeter, had attracted inevitable criticism during the war 'notably when official orders and regulations had to be enforced upon a public which was inclined to resent what was regarded as an infringement of long accustomed liberties'.¹¹² Nevertheless, he remained steadfast and did not deflect from 'the strict view he took of the responsibilities placed upon him, and subsequent events completely justified his actions'.¹¹³ According to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, Owen had taken the 'lead in every effort to stimulate patriotism whether in connection with the recruiting campaign, war savings, food

¹¹² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 July 1939, p. 14.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

economy, or other essential activities'.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, both Ziemann and Chickering have shown that in Germany, there were tensions between urban and rural communities because rural communities had different priorities in wartime as they were primarily concerned with their own needs.¹¹⁵

In Horne's view, the virtue of considering mobilization as a process or a 'totalizing logic' rather than an achieved result, is that it not only 'encourages analysis of its form and evolution but also of its constraints and limitations'.¹¹⁶ Horne describes that mobilization should be understood as a 'totalizing logic, or potential, of which contemporaries were acutely aware and which appeared profoundly new. This dizzying escalation occurred in different spheres'.¹¹⁷ However, just as this thesis is sceptical of a single monolithic war culture, so it questions whether there was an escalating and all-encompassing 'totalizing logic' of mobilization. Ziemann has revealed that the people of rural Bavaria were moulded by rural society. He argues using a reference to a study of the Second World War, which despite the experiences of the First World War, the inhabitants of rural Bavaria were still moulded by rural society and were 'at least partially resistant to the logic of modern industrial war'.¹¹⁸ It can be argued that Devonians during the First World War were also partially resistant to the logic of modern industrial war and that many were more concerned with individual priorities to ensure their survival through the war. In fact, in Devon from 1914 to 1918 there were multiple logics of mobilization which were also contested in a variety of ways by parts of the population, who often developed their own rationalisations for abstaining from

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany*, pp. 181-182, Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, pp. 184, 194-196.

¹¹⁶ Horne, 'Introduction', p. 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ Jens Ebert, 'Zwischen Mythos und Wirklichkeit. Die Schlacht um Stalingrad in deutschsprachigen authentischen und literarischen Texten', Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Phd Thesis, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 39 as cited in Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, p. 275.

the behaviours that the ‘provincial patriots’ prescribed for them. Similarly, the evidence from Devon seems to show a sceptical light upon the notion of ‘Total War’ in which during the ‘1914-18 conflict, all were mobilized; all were transformed’.¹¹⁹ Instead, the experiences of Devonians suggest that ‘Total War’ was more of a rhetorical construct rather than a literal term due to the fact that the war did not involve or affect every member of county society.¹²⁰ Ian F. W. Beckett argues that in practice ‘Total War’, akin to Clausewitz’s absolute war, was still a relative concept for the belligerent nations and that wartime ‘mobilization, like “universal conscription”, is always necessarily partial’.¹²¹ To some Devonians, the war was not the pre-eminent issue and did not absorb all of the county’s efforts.¹²² Ziemann has shown that the war in rural Bavaria ‘did not entail a comprehensive modernisation of rural behavioural models or norms’.¹²³ He concludes that for these rural communities, despite the ‘upheaval of war and inflation, continuity outweighed change’.¹²⁴ Likewise, this thesis is sceptical of the totality of the war in Devon as it is doubtful that all of the social changes ushered in reached all corners of the county. It could be argued that some contemporaries viewed idyllic Devon as a county that was out of place with regard to changing trends and

¹¹⁹ Winter, ‘Recent Trends in the Historiography of Britain and the First World War’, p. 92.

¹²⁰ David Monger, ‘The National War Aims Committee and British patriotism during the First World War’, Kings College London, PhD thesis, 2009, p. 10 n. 2, Stig Förster, ‘Introduction’ in R. Chickering and S. Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat, Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 7-9, Arthur Marwick, ‘Introduction’ in A. Marwick ed., *Total War and Social Change* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1988) pp. x-xxi, Hew Strachan, ‘From Cabinet to Total War: The Perspective of Military Doctrine, 1861-1918’ in R. Chickering and S. Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat, Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 19-33, Roger Chickering, ‘World War I and the Theory of Total War: Reflections on the British and German cases, 1914-1915’ in R. Chickering and S. Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat, Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 35-53, Arthur Marwick and Clive Emsley, ‘Introduction’ in A. Marwick, C. Emsley and W. Simpson eds., *Total War and Historical Change: Europe, 1914-1955* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001) pp. 1-23, Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘Total War’ in A. Marwick, C. Emsley and W. Simpson eds., *Total War and Historical Change: Europe, 1914-1955* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001) pp. 24-41.

¹²¹ Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Great War, 1914-1918*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007) p. 345, Keith Grieves, ‘Lloyd George and the British War Economy’ in R. Chickering and S. Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat, Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 384-385.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany*, p. 273.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

modernization.¹²⁵ In fact, based on the evidence of some commentators from the war years, there were some in Devon who were oblivious to the war and the importance of the conflict.¹²⁶ Whilst Devon's elite advocated and supported changes on a local level for the national interest, these were not necessarily accepted and adopted wholeheartedly by many of the county's population who were more concerned with self-interest and individual priorities.

According to Horne, the relationship between Home Front and Fighting Front was 'at root concerned with the material and moral well-being of loved ones and with individual survival'.¹²⁷ However, in Devon during the First World War, individual priorities were arguably more powerful impulses than national priorities. It is difficult to gauge the blurring line between individual priorities and national survival as the nature of where public and private interest merged or diverged is a topic for historical debate. Adrian Gregory acknowledges this dilemma when discussing the significance of the 'blunt figures of the "Tank Loan" [as they] do suggest something important and counter-intuitive about the popular mood in early 1918'.¹²⁸ Indeed, Gregory notes that it is difficult to gauge the reasons why contemporaries purchased these Tank Loans because whilst the mixture of patriotism and self-interest was unmistakeable the arguments of self-interest were complicated by the 'degree of willingness of individuals to merge self and public interest'.¹²⁹ Similar wartime tensions arose with the relationship between national survival and industrial production that were expressed by manufacturers.¹³⁰ However, many civilians in Essex were 'prepared to place their own

¹²⁵ Olive Hockin, *Two girls on the Land: Wartime on a Dartmoor farm* (London: Edward Arnold, 1918) p. 8.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹²⁷ Horne, 'Soldiers, Civilians and the Warfare of Attrition', p. 236.

¹²⁸ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 229

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Horne, 'Social Identity in War', p. 131.

self-interest above the cause of patriotism in order to enjoy a more comfortable war'.¹³¹ Accordingly, this thesis presents a critical assessment of how Devon's elite navigated through the tension between individual and national survival, and offer a deeper analysis of these superintendents of patriotism and how this changes our understanding of the role of the local elite in wartime

Sources and Methodology

To understand the relationship between Devon's elite and the county's population during the First World War, it is important to consider the sources that this thesis will utilize. It will employ primary source material from the three archive repositories of Devon: the Devon Heritage Centre, the North Devon record office and the Plymouth and West Devon record office. These archives contain a wide range of material and sources which include personal diaries and journals, letters and other forms of correspondence, the records of local government bodies, and other sources which can illuminate life in Devon between 1914 and 1918. Evidence from other archives in Britain including the National Archives, the Museum of English Rural Life, the Imperial War Museum, STEAM (the museum of the Great Western Railway), and Tiverton Museum will be used to complement the evidence from the Devon archives. Alongside these materials, the debates of the various branches of the Devon Farmers Union as well as the National Farmers Union will provide valuable insights into the views of Devon's farmers during the war. Moreover, when these testimonies are examined alongside the statistics for agriculture, in terms of output and agricultural labour, it will provide a deeper understanding of the productivity and response of farmers to wartime initiatives. Based on this analysis, it is clear that the county's farmers were concerned with the survival of their individual businesses as family

¹³¹ Rusiecki, *The Impact of Catastrophe*, p. 390.

concerns. However, in Devon's agricultural industry, women were employed on a small scale when compared to the number of soldiers and prisoners of war who worked on the farms as they were deemed to be seasonal replacement labour.¹³²

Another vital source is national and local newspapers from the county which include the *Western Morning News*, the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, the *Western Times*, and the *North Devon Journal*. In particular, local newspapers published in their pages editorials, articles, poems and letters from Devon's notables and the county's citizens. Despite the fact that newspapers can contain inaccuracies and factual errors, they can also offer a valuable perspective on life beyond the material left from Devon's elite and reveal the diverse range of individual reactions from the county's population towards the war effort from 1914 to 1918. The newspapers, both from a county level and a national level, are important media to understand individual voices not just those from above but also those from below. Equally, local poems published in the local press will be used as key items of evidence because they provide a reflection of the Devonian experience of the First World War. In Devon, it has been established that local newspapers were a key communicative form for the dissemination of local identity.¹³³ It is important to remember that both the Mayors' of Tiverton and Exeter, Alfred T. Gregory and James Owen respectively, were also newspaper proprietors and editors. Gregory was proprietor and editor of the *Tiverton Gazette* whilst Owen had a notable career in the newspaper world. Indeed, Owen was editor and managing director of the Western Times Ltd. which included under its administration a number of local newspapers including the *Western Times*, the *Bideford Gazette*, the *Daily Western Times*, and the

¹³² DHC: 1262M/L140, Labour Officer's Report, 17 April 1918.

¹³³ Andrew J. H. Jackson, 'Provincial Newspaper and the Development of Local Communities: The Creation of a Seaside Resort Newspaper for Ilfracombe, Devon, 1860-1', *Family & Community History*, Vol. 13, 2 (November 2010) p. 103.

Express and Echo.¹³⁴ This meant that these two men, Owen in particular, had the ability to control which news stories were published and how they were presented in their newspapers. Furthermore, as newspaper editors, Owen and Gregory could also police the definition of patriotism through the editorial columns of these papers and this would further help to disseminate their superintendence of patriotism. Letters and other forms of public and private correspondence can reveal the priorities of Devon's elite and the nature of the discussions between members of the county's civil society. In addition, letters from Devon's population can provide an insight into how Devonians lived with the wartime challenges on the Home Front. Similarly, the correspondence of Stephen Reynolds provides unparalleled observations in Devon to the events during the Great War because not only did he write about his own experiences as resident fisheries' inspector but also his writings provide a noteworthy reflection of the activities of Devon's elite in wartime. Reynolds's biographer Christopher Scoble contends that Reynolds was a unique social explorer because 'he was not driven by motives of class guilt or the desire for quick journalistic copy, academic reputation, or political solutions ... he made his whole life with the poor and wrote from the inside looking out'.¹³⁵

Yet, when examining the records deposited in Devon's archives, it is important to raise an awareness of the nature and limitations of the material. For instance, the description of the events and the meetings of local government entities in Devon were reliant on the individual documenting these proceedings. The minutes for Barnstaple Town Council were more organised when compared to the other records from other local government authorities including Honiton Rural District Council and West Alvington Parish

¹³⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 July 1939, p. 14.

¹³⁵ Christopher Scoble, 'Reynolds, Stephen Sydney (1881-1919)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Jan 2008, <<http://0-<www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/article/47513>>>, [Accessed 12 June 2013].

Council.¹³⁶ Roderick Heathcoat-Amory's *Reminiscences* is a valuable source because it contains his memories of life at Knightshayes court during the war and the role that his father, Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory, played from 1914 to 1918. However, as he is writing about his family Roderick's account does not necessarily provide an impartial interpretation of his father and it includes a number of factual discrepancies surrounding the family's textile factory in Tiverton during the war.¹³⁷ Hence, it is important to cross-examine his account alongside the Heathcoat-Amory factory logbook during the First World War. Through consultations with these sources as well as the local press, it is possible to not only shine a light upon the wartime operations of the textile factory but also to reveal how the factory's management attempted to resolve the crises and tensions that emerged as a result of the war. Similarly, this scrutiny will be applied to the sources deposited by Lord Fortescue, since his memoirs for the war years need to be examined against the diaries that he kept from 1914 to 1918. Although it is important to be wary of the pitfalls that surround memoirs and autobiographies created by individuals from Devon's civil society after the war, nevertheless, Roderick Heathcoat-Amory's account and Fortescue's memoirs still have great merit as sources for this study. Similar merit can also be found in the retrospective oral recollections from Devonians employed in the analysis presented in this thesis. Despite the limitations inherent in these sources, they can shed light on attitudes and events in Devon during the Great War.

It is also important to acknowledge the other limitations of the evidence, in particular the evidence that has not survived. An example of this is the material produced by the network of Military Service Tribunals. In 1921, the files of the 1,800 appeal tribunals

¹³⁶ NDRO: BC Vol. 15, Minutes of Barnstaple Town Council, 1914-1915, DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915-1920, DHC: 1122A/PP1, Minutes of West Alvington Parish Council, 1901-1940.

¹³⁷ Roderick Heathcoat-Amory, *Reminiscences* (n.p: Privately Published, 1989) pp. 14-15.

across the United Kingdom were destroyed on the command from the Ministry of Health.¹³⁸ The destruction of this evidence has meant historians' knowledge on the system of conscription during the war is pieced together from newspaper reports and other materials that have survived.¹³⁹ In Devon, there are some pieces of evidence which have escaped this destruction. The minute books for Brixham Tribunal have survived in the Devon Heritage Centre. These records provide an administrative overview of the deliberations that Brixham's Tribunal undertook from 1915 to 1918.¹⁴⁰ In addition, the consultation of the newspaper reports on these tribunals provides the opportunity for this thesis to gain a deeper and wider understanding of the tribunal system and the tribunalists in the county. This is complemented with the scrap book of newspaper cuttings from barrister Carl Ludwig Stirling which compiled the work of the Devon Appeal Tribunal. Through a compilation of the fragmented pieces of evidence related to conscription, this thesis will gain understanding of how the conscription system was perceived in Devon and how the county's residents responded to the judicial authority of the county's local elite as tribunalists. Another example of the limitations of the source material is related to recruitment for the Navy in Devon. The belief in the naval tradition of the county actually hindered the success of recruitment efforts for the Army in Devon throughout 1914 to 1916 and the efficacy of conscription from 1916 to 1918. This is reflected in the testimony of William Stone who recalled that in his family there was a great naval tradition to which it was designated that William and his elder brothers should join the Navy.¹⁴¹ In reality, recruitment for the Navy continued throughout the war. This meant that questions continued to be asked in Parliament by

¹³⁸ Adrian Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals: Civic Society in Action, 1916-1918' in J. Harris ed., *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 178, James McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918: 'A very much abused body of men'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) pp. 1-4.

¹³⁹ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918*, pp. 1-4.

¹⁴⁰ DHC: R4582Aadd2/BZ/2, Minute book of the Brixham Tribunal, 1915-1916, DHC: R4582Aadd2/BZ/3, Minute book of the Brixham Tribunal, 1917-1918.

¹⁴¹ William Stone, *Hero of the Fleet: Two World Wars, One extraordinary life – The Memoirs of Centenarian* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2009) pp. 45, 49.

Devon's local Members of Parliament (MP) about how many men had been recruited into the Navy.¹⁴² However, from 1914 to 1918, Devon's elite and these MP's were hesitant as to the number of county's men-folk who had joined the Navy. Indeed, when they discussed this subject, these local figures continued to be reluctant to pin point an exact number and instead gave repeated rough estimates of the number of Devon men in the Navy during the war.¹⁴³

The local civil histories of the 1914-1918 conflict created after the war are an example of how the local elite celebrated specific achievements of certain localities in these chronicles, at the expense of other forms of mobilization. For instance, in the local civic history of Swindon from 1914 to 1918, the author emphasized that 'local authority teachers had an impressive teaching record, sufficiently so to be recorded in the civic history'.¹⁴⁴ In Devon, these local civic histories that emerged after the war were intended to document the experience of the war years for specific localities. The authors chronicled and reflected upon the accomplishments and ingenuity of their respective localities. At the same time, successful endeavours were woven into these celebratory civic narratives of local exceptionalism during the war. One of the themes emphasized in these accounts of local exceptionalism from Devon are the humanitarian achievements of the county.¹⁴⁵ For instance, the account of Tavistock during the First World War promoted a collection of public-spirited achievements which included the collection of around 8,536 eggs and £45 11 s. 5d was raised for the purchase of eggs across the district.¹⁴⁶ A similar accomplishment was recorded for Princetown where the

¹⁴² Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 87, 16 November 1916, Column 1015W, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 90, 21 February 1917, Column 1326.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 89

¹⁴⁵ W. Fothergill Robinson, *Voluntary Aid in Devon* (Exeter: Eland Brothers, 1915), Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918*, pp. 1-20, 71-95, Rousham, *Exwick during the Great War*, pp. 7-29.

¹⁴⁶ Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918*, p. 94.

women of the town accumulated 3,215 sacks of Sphagnum Moss.¹⁴⁷ On 8 November 1918, the President of the Devon branch of the British Red Cross, Lady Fortescue revealed that the Devon branch was very successful because it had raised £6,300 15 s. 7 d. which exceeded ‘by over £900 the collection of any other County’.¹⁴⁸ This led Lady Fortescue to applaud that this was ‘another of the many proofs of Devon’s unbounded generosity which has been unfailing for every good object during the stress of the last 4 ½ years’.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Mr Lloyd Parry, the Town Clerk of Exeter, revealed that in respect to the War Saving’s Movement ‘Exeter can claim to be well in the forefront, as not long after the close of the war, it was found that local subscriptions to War Savings Certificates were in comparison with the population – 75 per cent more than the average of the whole country’.¹⁵⁰ These examples reaffirm the strength of the humanitarian nature of Devon’s patriotism and emphasized the accomplishments that Devon’s population had achieved in various philanthropic activities. The evidence that has survived from 1914 to 1918 will provide valuable insights into how Devon’s elite attempted to negotiate and overcome the tension between individual and national survival. It will also provide insight into pertinent nature of individual and local priorities on the Home Front in Devon for not only the members of the county’s local elite but also for Devonians.

Structure

This thesis is organised chronologically in four chapters. Each chapter considers a single year of the First World War, with the exception of Chapter 4 which covers the final two years of the conflict. Chapter 1 examines 1914, Chapter 2 will convey a critical reflection of 1915, Chapter 3 will create an analysis of 1916 and Chapter 4 will

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Emily Fortescue, ‘Devon and the Red Cross’, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 8 November 1918, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ DHC: FB 12/6/1, Documents of Town Clerk, p. 2.

provide an observation of both 1917 and 1918. The chronological structure reveals the evolutions in responsibilities and jurisdictions of Devon's elite. Moreover, the chronological structure will help to validate the argument of the changing nature of the superintendence of the social morality of wartime by Devon's elite through the war. It should also show how the changing nature of the Home Front and the nature of citizenship altered the nature of the policing responsibility of the county's notables.

Chapter 1 analyses how Devon's elite and the county's population adjusted to the transition from peacetime to wartime. The outbreak of war brought forward a number of diverse reactions to the news. However, the members of Devon's civil society attempted to mediate and channel the ways in which Devonians responded to the declaration of war. This influence was also noted in the way in which Devon's elite attempted to intermediate upon recruitment efforts in the county. Yet, in their exhortations and appeals to promote voluntary recruitment across the county, Devon's notables encountered hesitation and indifference. Their attempts to navigate through the terrain to reconcile individual priorities and those of the nation did not achieve universal success. At the same time, other forms of mobilization such as philanthropy found significant popularity in Devon. Indeed, the great flowering of charities related to the war effort reveals that voluntary aid found more resonance with the humanitarian sensibilities of the county's population. Therefore, these initial experiences of self-mobilization in Devon were met with mixed success.

Chapter 2 considers how Devon's elites reflected on the lacklustre experiences of 1914 and attempted to correct the indifferent responses from the county's population from the processes of self-mobilization. In terms of the lacklustre recruitment results, Devon's notables intended to recover the patriotic reputation of the county. Accordingly, various

members of Devon's civil society during 1915 conducted an intensified campaign of recruitment marches and meetings across the county to promote voluntary recruitment and educate Devon's men-folk of the necessity of military service. Despite some instances in Devon of increased recruitment rates, the campaign was not wholly successful throughout the county. By contrast, charities and philanthropic organisations continued to be well supported by Devonians as their involvement was a means to claim 'moral' citizenship in the wartime community. However, charitable efforts in the case of the Belgian Refugees in the county evoked instances of upper class tribalism. At the same time, the organisation of Devon's rural economy in 1915 for the war effort revealed the tension manifested in the responses of Devon's farmers and fishermen who were torn between the survival of their individual livelihoods and the demands made by the war effort in the name of national survival. Similarly, Devon's tourism industry struggled to adapt to the challenging conditions of wartime in 1915. An example of this is in the North Devon seaside town of Ilfracombe, where the tourism businesses attempted to navigate through the challenges of the 1915 holiday season. However, due to the social morality of the British war culture, the requisitioning of the railways and the austerity of wartime, Ilfracombe's holiday industry suffered greatly. Against this backdrop, Ilfracombe Urban District Council were concerned for the fortunes of their suffering holiday industry and attempted, but failed, to claim compensation to offset for the losses incurred as a result of the war. Meanwhile, the South Devon coastal resorts in 1915 were more ideally placed to adapt to the circumstances of wartime and the commercial opportunities wartime presented.

Chapter 3 evaluates conscription in Devon and the changed dynamics of citizenship on the Home Front which were heralded by the network of Military Service Tribunals across the county. Devon notables who constituted the tribunal panels became self-

appointed agents who adjudicated upon the individual applications for appeal from the county's men-folk. Through the arbitration of these appeals, the tribunalists on Devon's tribunals had to negotiate through the tension present in these applications for exemption between individual priorities and national ones. Devon's local and Appeal Tribunals gave the 'provincial patriots' an opportunity to arbitrate upon the patriotism presented before them in the appeals for exemption from conscription and provided them with a platform to broadcast their views on patriotism. Moreover, the tribunals allowed the provincial patriots to extend their campaigns of superintendence of the wartime behaviour of Devon's population. Despite the pleas from Devon's notables that the conscription of the county's men was vital for national survival, many of Devon's population understood the consequences of conscription upon the survival of their businesses and industries. This was also evident in the John Heathcoat & Company textile factory where Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory faced a continuous struggle during 1916 in his negotiations with the male lace workers to introduce female labour into the factory's lace manufacturing operations. However, Heathcoat-Amory faced a conflict of interest to fulfil his obligations not only to work with his employees as an enlightened employer but also to the requests from the wartime authorities. Subsequently, the introduction of the War Charities Act of 1916 was intended to regulate charities and stop cases of fraud. However, this did little to dampen the support of Devonians in philanthropic efforts.

Chapter 4 covers the period that has been defined by Horne as 'remobilization'. This second wave of mobilization entailed the recognition of sacrifices which were previously deemed unacceptable to guarantee the prospect of victory. In Devon, the interventionist measures of mobilization in the county's rural economy that were introduced, such as the Corn Production Act of 1917, were intended to undertake this

remobilization for victory. The National War Aims Committee intended to fight against the instances of war weariness present in Devon and convince the county's population to continue to support the war. With the requirements of remobilization, Devon's notables on tribunal panels had to enforce the ever changing requirements surrounding what were reserved occupations in the county. At the same time, this increased the amount of criticism against Devon's tribunals, the decisions of the tribunals and the authority of the tribunalists. These escalated demands also influenced how local government and welfare entities in Devon attempted to navigate through the challenges of the last two years of the war.

The main analytical thread that runs through this thesis is how the members of Devon's civic society became the police-men and women of patriotism. As intermediaries of wartime, they extended their jurisdiction and responsibility to exhort and attempt to enforce the social morality of wartime across the county. The way that Devon's elite attempted to negotiate through not only the challenges of wartime but also the competing interests of individual priorities and national ones is an important theme that transcends the chapters of this thesis. In Devon, patriotism was contested by multiple parties because it was not solely rooted in a lexicon of military endeavour. This meant that vocabularies of mobilization were unintentionally interpreted in a number of different ways by Devon's population. Some saw the necessity of volunteering to defend the nation whilst others interpreted the languages of mobilization to provide a justification to stay in Devon in order to continue to farm the land. By understanding mobilization as a system of processes and projects, the evidence from Devon reveals the uncoordinated nature of the diverse responses to wartime mobilization. This thesis will suggest that since the war effort was not a unifying principle in Devon, the same can be said of the languages which expressed national mobilization as they did not unify the

county's population. The fact that patriotism was contested by many parties made it a more challenging concept for Devon's elite to superintend. This thesis will argue that Devon's elite became active proponents and self-appointed police-men and women of the social morality of wartime. Through these revelations, this study of the Home Front in Devon will add to the knowledge of the effectiveness of the logics of mobilization in Britain and further our understanding of the war effort as a non-unifying phenomenon on a local level. Moreover, this study can be used as an example of how local populations engaged with the demands exhorted by the local elite and how these demands were rationalized by the local population, producing a frictional relationship between Devon's elites as superintendents of the social morality of wartime and the county's population.

Chapter 1:
Mobilizing for war
August 1914 to December 1914

Introduction

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Serbian terrorists on 28 June 1914 instigated a diplomatic impasse between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. This subsequently resulted in the deterioration of relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia on 27 July, due to Serbia's acceptance of the forty-eight hour ultimatum and 'Austria-Hungary's immediate dismissal of the conciliatory Serbia's response'.¹ Consequently, this chain of events set in motion a crisis which enveloped the nations of Europe and ultimately became a global conflict.² In Britain, the European crisis overshadowed the British population's domestic concerns and fears of a civil war in Ireland.³ This was reflected in a letter written by Sidmouth inhabitant Stephen Reynolds to his Aunt Jane Reynolds on 1 August 1914. In his letter, he expressed his expectation that she was 'very startled and worried over these threatenings of war. It has hit us very hard here, for the British mobilisation – newspapers to the contrary – is undoubtedly very complete ... The suspense is sickening'.⁴ Yet, despite the suspense that accompanied how the crisis would develop, Reynolds was under the impression that the crisis of the summer of 1914 would blow over leaving 'Europe all the better for this glimpse into her mad idiocy of armaments'.⁵ However, in his sermon on 2 August 1914, the Reverend R. J. E. Beggis of St Mary Magdalene church in Barnstaple observed that

¹ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 24.

² Hew Strachan, *The First World War, Volume I: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 114.

³ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 24-25, *North Devon Journal*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

⁴ Stephen Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. by Harold Wright (Richmond: Hogarth press, 1923) p. 191.

⁵ *Ibid.*

the ‘minds of well-nigh all Englishmen have been occupied – gravely occupied – by one all absorbing anxiety … world-wide crisis’.⁶ Indeed, the escalation of the crisis into the declaration of war amongst the nations of Europe and their global empires had, in turn, heightened the anxieties of the British population. The editor of the *North Devon Journal* compared the outbreak of war to the arrival of a troubling storm, stating that ‘the dreaded war cloud has burst’.⁷ Accordingly, he felt that the result of this thundering downpour meant that the greatest military and naval struggle known in history was being waged.⁸ As his commentary reveals, many in Devon saw the magnitude of this war cloud on the horizon and were deeply anxious about the gravity of the conflict that Britain and her empire had entered into.⁹

Yet, in the historiographies of this conflict, it was previously argued that the British, French and German populations welcomed the declaration of war, with mass enthusiasm and patriotic zeal.¹⁰ This interpretation was primarily based upon the evidence of the recollections and images of crowds in London, Paris and Berlin receiving the news of the war with energetic jubilation.¹¹ The pictures of exhilarated crowds accompanying departing troops to German railway stations became the key evidence in the interpretation of ‘a Germany united in enthusiasm’.¹² In fact, the reactions of people from metropolitan communities had been transposed to include how the national populations of Britain, France and Germany experienced a collective wave of enthusiasm and were euphoric about the war.¹³ As a result, Arthur Marwick came to

⁶ *North Devon Journal*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Stuart Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, *Cornish Studies*, Vol. 11, (2003) p. 85.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Adrian Gregory, Emmanuelle Cronier, Jeffrey Verhey and Pierre Purseigle, ‘Railway stations’ in J. Winter and J-L Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 29.

¹³ Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, p. 85.

the conclusion that ‘British society in 1914 was strongly jingoistic and showed marked enthusiasm at the outbreak of war’.¹⁴ However, recent studies have dispelled the myth that enthusiasm for war was universally shared amongst the populations of France, Germany and the United Kingdom in their reactions to the outbreak of war.¹⁵ Adrian Gregory posits that the simplistic generalisations of a common, widespread war enthusiasm have ironed out the complexities of society and glossed over the complexity of individual responses to the declaration of war.¹⁶ The move beyond the monolithic interpretation that the outbreak of war produced mass jingoistic fervour for war has been achieved by shifting attention away from the responses of the capital cities of London, Paris and Berlin towards the examination of the reactions to the war on a local level.¹⁷ Instead, these studies have revealed that French, German and British societies experienced an intricate range of diverse responses to the declaration of war in 1914.¹⁸

Equally, these studies have extended their focus to scrutinize the reactions of populations and communities to the outbreak of war in specific regions, districts, cities, towns, villages and hamlets. The results of these inquiries have added further doubt as to whether a complex phenomenon such as a national society can respond to an event in a united fashion. Simultaneously, these studies have also investigated how the populations of the belligerent nations adapted to the transition from peace to war with

¹⁴ Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 349.

¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: Comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977), Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Adrian Gregory, ‘British “War Enthusiasm” in 1914: a Reassessment’ in G. Braybon ed., *Evidence, History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008) pp. 67-85, Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 22-56.

¹⁶ Gregory, ‘British “War Enthusiasm” in 1914’, p. 81.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-85, Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 22-56.

¹⁸ Jean-Jacques Becker, ““That’s The Death Knell Of Our Boys...””, in P. Fridenson ed., *The French Home Front, 1914-1918* (Providence: Berg, 1992) pp. 17-35, Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, pp. 58-71, Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (London: Penguin Books, 1999) pp. 174-211, Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp. 9-30, Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 227-232.

the mechanisms of national mobilization. Horne has stressed that national mobilization was ‘an essentially political and cultural process’.¹⁹ In Horne’s view, the virtue of considering mobilization as a process or a ‘totalizing logic’ rather than an achieved result, is that it not only ‘encourages analysis of its form and evolution but also of its constraints and limitations’.²⁰ It is also clear that the mobilization of the national community in 1914 behind the lines in France and the other belligerent nations produced cultures of wartime.²¹

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker define this complex war culture of 1914-18 as a ‘collection of representations of the conflict that crystallised into a system of thought which gave the war its deep significance’.²² They both also stress that this war culture led to the emergence of a powerful hatred of the enemy.²³ In his study on the image of the profiteer, Jean-Louis Robert pointed out that these wartime depictions were vital in order to construct how ‘contemporaries envisioned and represented the system of social relations in which they lived’ from 1914 to 1918.²⁴ These representations provided civilians and combatants with a ‘framework of meaning for sacrifice, for material hardships and the redistribution of wealth’.²⁵ On a local level, Pierre Purseigle has revealed in his study of British and French communities during the war that local elites were important intermediaries for the war effort by disseminating

¹⁹ John Horne, ‘Introduction: mobilizing for “total war”, 1914-1918’ in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²¹ John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) pp. 291-325, Annette Becker, ‘Faith, Ideologies, and the “Cultures of War”’ trans. by John Horne in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 234-247, Annette Becker, ‘The Visual Arts’ trans. by Helen McPhail in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 338, Leonard V. Smith, ‘France’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 421, Gerhard Hirschfeld, ‘Germany’ translated by Mark Jones in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 434-435.

²² Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18: Understanding the Great War*, trans. by Catherine Temerson (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002) p. 102.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²⁴ Jean-Louis Robert, ‘The image of the profiteer’ in J. Winter and J-L Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 105.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

these wartime frameworks of meaning to their local communities.²⁶ The employment of these national representations and the connection to this wider war culture were evident in the reactions of the local elites of Northampton and Béziers to the fate of Belgium and prisoners of war.²⁷ It is clear that this vision of the war which was transmitted and mediated by the local elite to their respective communities ‘fell into line with the national mobilization whose “totalizing logic” enlisted the cultural, moral, and ideological commitment of each nation to fight an uncivilised enemy to its total destruction, lest its victory should lead to the end of one’s culture, identity and way of life’.²⁸ This meant that the elites of a local community became essential intermediaries and campaigners for the arbitration of the war effort on a local level and for the mobilization of the local populations for war. The complex cultures of war that emerged in 1914 with their distinct depictions of sacrifice, patriotism and duty were vital in the study of the British Home Front during the First World War. This is because these war cultures provided a means for individuals, communities and societies across the belligerent nations to understand and participate in the war.

This chapter will examine the county of Devon from 1 August 1914 until 31 December 1914. Firstly, there will be a survey of the socio-economic composition of Devon and the nature of Devon’s elite in 1914. Secondly, there will be an assessment of the reactions of Devonians to news of the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914. It will take into account the developments in the historiography of the responses to war in Britain, the revision of the trans-national historiography towards the outbreak of war and how the analysis of these can help in understanding the nature of responses to war in Devon. This consideration will take into account the reactions to the war in Devon across the

²⁶ Pierre Purseigle, ‘Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War’ in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) p. 96-99.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

different sections of society in the county with equal reflection of the responses from both Devon's urban and rural communities. In addition, how the Diocese of Exeter responded to the outbreak of war will be also be included in this discussion. Thirdly, there will be a critical exploration of recruitment efforts in the county for the Army and the Navy from August 1914 to December 1914. This will help to clarify how recruitment for the Army and Navy was an integral process of mobilization for communities on a local level. It will also consider the difference between the ideal projection by Devon's elite of what recruitment efforts should have yielded in the county and the stark reality of what recruitment efforts did achieve from some districts within Devon. Fourthly, this chapter will investigate and scrutinize these mobilization efforts in Devon during 1914. This investigation will specifically focus on and consider the cultural/political and economic processes of mobilization. Through an exploration of mobilization in these two contexts, the analysis presented in this section will strengthen the argument that Devon's patriotism was similar to Cornwall's in that it was not of a militaristic nature but more of a humanitarian one.

The reason for dedicating a chapter to the study of 1914 is that it provides an important starting point for the analysis of efforts which Horne defines as 'self-mobilization' for the war effort and the emergence of the Home Front in the county of Devon.²⁹ Stuart Dalley's investigation of Cornwall after the outbreak of war has shown that it is important not to forget how specific localities differed in their responses and adaption to the processes of mobilization.³⁰ To examine the year 1914 on its own merits presents the opportunity to cross examine the ideas of the trans-national historiography of early mobilization against the evidence from the county of Devon. It is important to construct a study of the Home Front in a chronological manner because it provides the

²⁹ Horne, 'Introduction', p. 7.

³⁰ Dalley, 'The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', pp. 85-109.

opportunity for a more comprehensive understanding of the processes of the early mobilization efforts at a local level. Horne has suggested that the ‘study of wartime mobilization is partly about the ideal projections of military and civilian planners; but also about the lived relationship of a variety of different groups (intellectuals, school teachers, children, soldiers and many more) to the war and to its meaning’.³¹ 1914 was the year when Devon’s elite broadcast their intentions of how they hoped the county’s population would respond to the war’s calls for sacrifice and become involved in the processes of mobilization. The dualism between the plans for mobilization in the county and the reality of the mobilization efforts in Devon during 1914 helps to reveal the tension that the ‘provincial patriots’ had between individual and national priorities. Consequently, the central aspect of this chapter is the beginning of Devon’s elite engagement in the war effort.

Stephen Reynolds, the Inspector for the South West Fisheries (ISWF) during the war, labelled Devon’s elite as the ‘provincial patriots’.³² These civic figures in Devon were important not only to the war effort but also to stability in the county. It can also be seen that local notable figures such as Lord Fortescue and the Mayors of Barnstaple and Exeter felt their role was to relay a sense of calm in order to allay people’s fears in the midst of a crisis. At the same time, they sought to police mobilization efforts in Devon and believed that they should superintend the ‘patriotism of those who are not [exempt from military service]’.³³ Hence, through the process of weighing the patriotism of Devonians against the strength of their own patriotism, the ‘provincial patriots’ attempted to establish their authority amongst the county’s population over the criteria of wartime participation. This chapter will also consider the early efforts of the

³¹ Horne, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.

³² Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 291.

³³ *Ibid.*

'provincial patriots' to mobilize Devon's citizens alongside their attempts to police mobilization efforts in the county. In Devon, the 'provincial patriots' hoped to shape and monitor the arbitration of the war experience. Nevertheless, the evidence from Devon's archives will reveal that the efforts of the 'provincial patriots' to mobilize districts across the county were not entirely successful.

During the opening months of the war, the individual concerns of Devonians continued to linger despite the calls for sacrifice and recruitment efforts in the county. Bonnie White suggested that the lack of centralized recruiting agencies in Devon meant that it 'took considerably more time to organize recruitment efforts in the county than in the large urban centres [of Britain]'.³⁴ There was a distinct discrepancy between the responses to recruitment efforts in Devon's urban centres and those living in the rural districts of the county.³⁵ In particular, she identifies that in the remote north west of Devon the 'recruitment campaign failed to convey the true gravity of the country's position and residents were sluggish in responding to the war effort'.³⁶ Yet, this chapter will build upon the argument and suggest that the indifferent and sluggish responses to the war were even more widespread across Devon than White suggests. In fact, the evidence from across Devon reinforces the idea that the war effort was not perceived to be an all-encompassing phenomenon. This meant that the tension and constant negotiation between individual priorities and national ones was unmistakeable in some of the Devonian responses to the war. Alongside the early mobilization efforts and the emergence of a war culture in 1914, Devon's population as well as those of Britain and France faced what Horne has described as the 'choice of 1914'.³⁷ The 'choice of 1914'

³⁴ Bonnie J. White, 'Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 52, 3 (2009) p. 641.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 641-642.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 642.

³⁷ John N. Horne, *Labour at war: France and Britain, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) pp. 42-43, 83.

revealed not only a straight forward choice between the decision to participate in the war effort or not but also a concern on the part of the residents of the county as to how to engage with the war effort. This anxiety as to what the war would mean in their lives was particularly evident in the responses from Devonians to the outbreak of war.

Devon and its local elite in 1914

By the twentieth century, Devon was the fourth largest county in England with a population of around 700,000 people.³⁸ The majority of the county's population was primarily centred in the three recently amalgamated towns of Plymouth, East Stonehouse and Devonport, which contained the Royal Navy port to create 'a greater Plymouth'.³⁹ In 1914, these three towns became the city of Plymouth with a populace of more than 200,000.⁴⁰ In comparison, Exeter, the capital city of Devon, had around 50,000 people.⁴¹ The remainder of Devon's population was spread across the county's various districts with Barnstaple, the largest town in North Devon, having a population of 12,231, whilst the West Devon town of Tavistock had fewer than 5,000 people.⁴² The growth of the railways in Devon during the nineteenth century had improved access to all regions of the county, which in turn had strengthened the rise of the tourism industry in the towns and villages along both of Devon's coastlines.⁴³ Hence, tourism had by 1914 grown to be Devon's largest industry employing a domestic labour force of 55,000 people.⁴⁴

³⁸ W. G. Hoskins, *Devon and its people* (Exeter: A. Wheaton & Co. Ltd, 1959) p. 159.

³⁹ Jeffrey Stanyer, *A History of Devon County Council, 1889-1989* (Exeter: Devon Books, 1989) p. 23.

⁴⁰ Hoskins, *Devon and its people*, p. 159.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² W. G. Hoskins, *Devon* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003) pp. 65-68.

⁴³ F. B. May, 'Victorian and Edwardian Ilfracombe' in J. K. Walton and J. Walvin eds., *Leisure in Britain, 1780-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) pp. 187-202, Robin Stanes, *A History of Devon* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 1986) pp. 111-115, John Frederick Travis, 'The rise of Holidaymaking on the Devon coast: 1750-1900, with particular reference to health and entertainment', University of Exeter, PhD thesis, 1988.

⁴⁴ Hoskins, *Devon and its people*, p. 159.

Nonetheless, despite these developments, communication between North and South Devon was still slow and inconvenient.⁴⁵ Devon was primarily a rural county despite the urbanisation that had taken place as a result of the railways. The strength of Devon's rural economy was reflected in the fact that farming was the county's second most important industry.⁴⁶ There were around 11,000 farmers and 21,000 labourers working on farms that were mainly family run businesses with less than 100 acres.⁴⁷ In total, farming provided a living for about 48,000 people in Devon.⁴⁸ The rural economy was also supported by other occupations such as carpenters and blacksmiths. The statistics of the 1911 census reveal that Devon had 4,183 Carpenters, 1,806 Blacksmiths and Forge Workers, 335 Saddlers and Harness-makers, and 737 Wheel-wrights and Cartwrights.⁴⁹ Yet, Devon's economy also included businesses which provided alternative choices for employment to the county's rural populace. The growth of the railways and other modes of transportation meant that transport employed 23,000 people in Devon. Consequently, transport established itself as the county's third largest sector of employment.⁵⁰ It must also be noted that it was believed that Devon possessed a distinct naval tradition.⁵¹ In fact, it was recognised in 1912 official return that Devon and Cornwall had more men in the Navy than the whole of Wales and Scotland.⁵² Therefore, by 1914, Devon was a traditional recruiting ground for the Navy and some contemporaries had called the county the 'Shire of the Sea Kings' as a result of Devon's Naval past.⁵³

⁴⁵ Devon Heritage Centre: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Hoskins, *Devon and its people*, p. 159.

⁴⁷ Hoskins, *Devon*, pp. 66-69.

⁴⁸ Hoskins, *Devon and its people*, p. 159.

⁴⁹ Pamela Horn, *Rural Life in England in the First World War* (Dublin: Gil and Macmillan Ltd, 1984) p. 235.

⁵⁰ Hoskins, *Devon and its people*, p. 160.

⁵¹ *North Devon Journal*, 17 December 1914, p. 6.

⁵² *North Devon Journal*, 10 December 1914, p. 2.

⁵³ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 16 February 1915, p. 4, TNA: RAIL 268/217, GWR Devon: Shire of the Sea Kings, 1916.

At the apex of Devon's civil society were the county's landowners, its manufacturers, civic figures, clerics and other local notables. The most important of these figures in Devon was Lord Hugh Fortescue, the fourth Earl Fortescue and a British peer.⁵⁴ As the Lord Lieutenant of Devon from 1904 to 1928, Hugh Fortescue was the representative of King George V in Devon and was able to exert a considerable influence upon county life. Fortescue was also involved in a multitude of public activities and entities in Devon. He was the Chairman of Devon County Council (DCC) from 1904 to 1916, a Prominent Freemason, the Devon Quarter Sessions Chairman, and Master of the Devon and Somerset Stag Hounds.⁵⁵ Moreover, as the King's Representative for Devon he also participated in the 'extra duties of necessity' during the war.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Lady Fortescue also held similar authority over several local societies with female membership, including the Women's Institute and the Devon Nursing Association.⁵⁷ Another prominent social figure who was able to wield significant influence in Devon was Tiverton industrialist Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory who became the second baronet Heathcoat-Amory of Knightshayes Court on 29 May 1914.⁵⁸ Heathcoat-Amory managed the family's textile manufacturing business, John Heathcoat & Company (JHC), and the operations of their lace factory in Tiverton.⁵⁹ As his family were enlightened employers, he worked with his workforce in an attempt to provide a harmonious and benevolent relationship between employer and employee. In addition, both the Mayor of Tiverton and the recorder for Tiverton, Alfred T. Gregory and Sir Trehawke Kekewich respectively, were civic worthies who were not only notable

⁵⁴ *Western Morning News*, 31 October 1932, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Stanyer, *A History of Devon County Council*, p. 45, *Western Times*, 4 November 1932, p. 10.

⁵⁶ *Western Morning News*, 31 October 1932, p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 13 July 1929, p. 10.

⁵⁸ *Western Times*, 9 January 1931, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Mike Sampson, *A History of Tiverton* (Tiverton: Tiverton War Memorial Trust, 2004) p. 292.

personages of local life in the mid-Devon town but also in the public, political and social life in Devon.⁶⁰

Similarly, the Mayor and Mayoress of Exeter, Sir James and Lady Owen correspondingly, were important dignitaries in the city.⁶¹ It also must be observed that both Sir James Owen and Alfred T. Gregory were significant figures in Devon due to the fact that they were also editors of several local newspapers which included the *Western Times*, the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, the *Express and Echo*, the *South Molton Gazette* and the *Tiverton Gazette*.⁶² During the war, the Diocese of Exeter was under the authority of two Bishops. Archibald Robinson was the Bishop of Exeter from 1903 to 1916.⁶³ The office was then taken over by Lord William Cecil in 1916 who remained as Bishop until 1936.⁶⁴ Another local civic figure of a rather different type was Stephen Reynolds, a Sidmouth resident and man of letters. As author of the *Poor Man's House* and *Seems So!*, Reynolds was a keen advocate of social reform and for the fishing communities of Devon and Cornwall.⁶⁵ Christopher Scoble suggests that it was ‘through his membership of the [Cecil] Harmsworth committee of 1913 and the inshore fisheries committee of 1914 [that] he secured almost single-handed a revolution in longshore fisheries policy’.⁶⁶ This included co-operation in marketing, the utilisation of motor power for fishing vessels and new systems of insurance for fishermen.⁶⁷ By 1914, Reynolds was able to implement these reforms in the fisheries in the South-West when

⁶⁰ *North Devon Journal*, 1 January 1942, p. 3, *Western Morning News*, 11 March 1932, p. 8.

⁶¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 July 1939, p. 14, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 30 July 1943, p. 8.

⁶² *North Devon Journal*, 1 January 1942, p. 3, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 July 1939, p. 14.

⁶³ Nicholas Orme, ‘The Twentieth Century, Part 2: Devon and General’ in N. Orme ed., *Unity and Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991) p. 181.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Christopher Scoble, ‘Reynolds, Stephen Sydney (1881-1919)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Jan 2008, <<http://0-<www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/article/47513>>>, [Accessed 12 June 2013].

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

he became fisheries advisor to the Development Commission.⁶⁸ However, despite his accomplishments, Reynolds viewed himself as an outsider to Devon's civil society due to the fact that 'he went to live with the poor because he disliked the cold sterility of middle-class culture'.⁶⁹ In the transition from peace to war during the summer of 1914, Devon's elite witnessed how Devonians adapted to the circumstances of wartime. At the same time, it is clear that the county's notables attempted to mediate and control the events that accompanied this dramatic shift.

Reactions to war in Devon and the transition from peace to wartime

The news of the crisis that engulfed Europe from 23 July 1914 until 4 August 1914, caught the attention of the British public. According to Catriona Pennell, it was clear that in the days and weeks before the declaration of war on 4 August 1914 the British people were curious about how the crisis would unfold.⁷⁰ Indeed, the 'uncertainty, and anxiety to discover the latest news formed one of the principal motives of spontaneous gatherings, where the national press arrived, were logical meeting points'.⁷¹ It became a common-place occurrence across the United Kingdom in the days before 4 August 1914 to see throngs of people waiting outside newspaper offices and railway stations to either read or hear the latest news.⁷² According to an anonymous correspondent for the *Western Times*, it was evident that the streets of Exeter on 3 August 1914 wore an 'animated appearance', where crowds of people 'read with eager interest the various messages which from time to time were posted in the windows of the office of this journal'.⁷³ It is also clear this phenomenon was not restricted to Exeter. In Barnstaple, eager crowds of people had gathered outside the offices of the *Western Times* to wait 'in

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 42.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷³ *Western Times*, 4 August 1914, p. 6.

the hope of hearing some fresh news'.⁷⁴ Similar scenes were documented in Torquay and Newton Abbot through the night of 3 August 1914.⁷⁵ In his study of German public opinion, Jeffrey Verhey observes that the sight of what he describes as curious crowds of people waiting through the afternoon and evening of 3 August 1914 in public squares or outside newspaper offices for news was also present in German towns and cities.⁷⁶ Verhey argues that these crowds were anxiously waiting in curious suspense and some individuals in these curious crowds devoured every up-to-date scrap of news that they could lay their hands on.⁷⁷

The appetite for news was also present at Exmouth railway station where the newsboys, who supplied the *Express and Echo* in the resort, found themselves throughout the 3 August swamped by large numbers of Exonians and tourists eager for the latest developments.⁷⁸ This was especially apparent after the 2.25pm train from Exeter had brought to the newsboys their copies of the newspaper.⁷⁹ A few minutes after they had received these supplies, crowds at Exmouth railway station eagerly snapped up all the latest copies of the paper.⁸⁰ Among the crowd, there were a 'large number of Territorials, who were on leave from the Woodbury Camp, and who were not the least eager to learn the latest news'.⁸¹ It is important to consider that these Territorials probably wanted to enjoy their holidays with their families and loved ones in the South Devon resort rather than face the prospect of mobilizing for active service. It is clear that in Exmouth, the serious nature of the news had to a degree dampened the holiday

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, p. 73.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁷⁸ *Western Times*, 4 August 1914, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

spirit for many people in the resort: ‘No one apparently thought or talked of anything else but the war, and of the chance of Great Britain being dragged into conflict’.⁸²

Despite the fact that the 3 August 1914 was the August bank holiday, one of the busiest and most important holidays of the year for Devon’s tourism industry, it was obvious to the columnist of the *Western Times* that the ‘gloom of war was everywhere apparent ... [and] ... there was a marked absence of the customary holiday spirit’.⁸³ Indeed, Alfred T. Gregory confessed that due to the gloomy prospect of war, 3 August was ‘no time for pleasure-trips or fetes’ despite the fact that it was a public holiday.⁸⁴ The absence of the typical holiday spirit was also reflected in the significantly reduced number of holiday makers who visited the resort for the Bank Holiday. It was calculated that only 1,500 holiday makers had passed through Exmouth Railway Station by 3 August which represented around ‘half the usual bookings for a normal August Bank Holiday’.⁸⁵ However, the reduced number of excursionists who travelled to Exmouth railway station needs to be considered in light of the practicalities of the situation. The newspaper argued that it would be counterproductive for large numbers of excursionists to crowd railway stations when it ‘might be necessary at any moment to keep the line clear for the conveyance of troops’.⁸⁶ When faced with the possibility of Britain becoming embroiled in war, sensible people in the resort ‘had no inclination to indulge in frivolity’.⁸⁷ In fact, the newspaper went on to stress that this serious reaction towards the crisis was present amongst the higher quarters of society, the middle and upper middle class holidaymakers.⁸⁸ At the same time, in the faces of some of the holidaymakers across the resort there was evidence of a ‘subdued, but tense,

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Alfred T. Gregory, *Recollections of a Country Editor* (Tiverton: Tiverton Gazette, 1932) p. 60.

⁸⁵ *Western Times*, 4 August 1914, p. 3.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

excitement'.⁸⁹ It is important to identify and analyse the exact nature of this subdued, but tense, excitement present in some of the reactions from Devon's population to the prospect of war.

Pennell suggested the news of the crisis provided for some individuals the most interesting piece of news and gossip. In Torrington, the rumours of war in the first days of August had caused 'great excitement in the town, as in other parts of the country'.⁹⁰ This is also evident in the diary of Albert Best, a plumber in Teignmouth, where he noted on 2 August that the escalation of the crisis to the possibility of war had created great excitement in Teignmouth because of the mobilization of the 'Naval reservists being called up and hurrying away by train throughout the day'.⁹¹ Accordingly, the proximity to military centres was an important factor which helped to influence the reaction of some communities in the county towards the outbreak of the war. However, when Best heard about the outbreak of war he recorded a distinctly neutral response: 'Unfavourable reply last night to ultimatum so that war is declared'.⁹² Jean-Jacques Becker has argued that it is important to clarify exactly the nature of the sentiments that were expressed in response to the outbreak of war, the first announcement of mobilization and the actual departure of troops.⁹³ Therefore, through this examination of the nature of these sentiments, there is a striking difference in Best's reaction from the excitement of the mobilization of the Naval Reserves to the transformation of war 'from a prospect into a fact'.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *North Devon Journal*, 31 December 1914, p. 7.

⁹¹ Albert Best, *The Diaries of Albert Best: A resident of Teignmouth: Part 3, 1st January 1914 to 9th September 1920*, ed. by Alan Best (Torquay: Alan Best, 2009) 2 August 1914, p. 9.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Becker, "That's The Death Knell Of Our Boys...", pp. 34-35.

⁹⁴ Roger Chickering, "War Enthusiasm?" Public Opinion and the Outbreak of War in 1914' in H. Afflerbach and D. Stevenson eds., *An Improbable War: The Outbreak of World War I and European Culture before 1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007) p. 202.

Yet, it is evident that the anxiety, nervous excitement and urgent need for news in Exmouth and other localities in Devon adds weight to the argument that the ‘serious nature of the news [had] made a deep impression’ in the county.⁹⁵ By 4 August 1914, Reynolds wrote to his Aunt Jane with more certainty that to him ‘War seems almost inevitable, but I gather that when the scare settles down to business the financial situation will improve’.⁹⁶ As the Reverend Beggis preached in his sermon on 2 August at St Mary Magdalene church in Barnstaple, it was clear that the Devon population’s interest in the crisis had ‘given place to apprehension and apprehension has grown into anxiety, and anxiety has developed into alarm’.⁹⁷ This interest had continued to fuel the eagerness for news that continued on 4 August 1914. Pennell notes that outside the offices of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, the eager Exeter crowds were ‘marked by their “placidity” and “sobriety”’.⁹⁸ Moreover, a crowd of many hundreds similarly waited to read with ‘avidity every item of news as it was posted in the windows’ of the *Western Times* offices in Exeter.⁹⁹ After the British Government’s demand for the withdrawal of the German Army from Belgium had expired on the 4 August 1914 at 11 pm, Britain declared war on Germany.¹⁰⁰ The news that war had been declared spread to Devon, as mentioned previously, through the national and local press. However, it is also important to bear in mind that communication between the North and the South of Devon in 1914 was slow and inconvenient.¹⁰¹ In the North Devon village of West Buckland, a woman recalled that it was the postman who had brought news of the outbreak of war to the village. Throughout the day, she saw the village’s men-folk ‘all

⁹⁵ *Western Times*, 4 August 1914, p. 3.

⁹⁶ Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 192.

⁹⁷ *North Devon Journal*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

⁹⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 7 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 42.

⁹⁹ *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 35, David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2004) p. 32.

¹⁰¹ Devon Heritage Centre: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 2.

congregated round the postman's hut to hear the news'.¹⁰² In Plymouth, Marjorie Laxton remembered that on 4 August 1914 she heard soldiers running through the city's streets 'shouting "War Declared, War Declared"'.¹⁰³ In her recollection, she indicated that these men were not rejoicing at the news of the war by shouting in Plymouth's streets. Instead, they were running to deliver the poignant news to people of one of the key events of their lifetime. The astonishment in the way that some Devonians received the news of war was recorded by A. H. Rousham, who observed that in the village of Exwick the declaration of war had arrived 'like a bomb to break the peace and quietness of village life'.¹⁰⁴

The nature of the responses in Britain's villages, towns and cities to the news of war has provided an interesting point for historical analyses of the outbreak of war. Verhey argues that the 4 August crowds present in Germany's cities and towns are an 'especially rich text' in the study of public opinion.¹⁰⁵ This is also true of the crowds in Exeter. According to the correspondent for the *Western Times*, once Exeter's crowds had received the news that Britain had declared war against Germany the throng of people 'moved to an impressive outburst'.¹⁰⁶ The newspaper went on to describe this sight as a scene of tremendous enthusiasm as the declaration of war was a confirmed fact: 'A tremendous cheer was raised, and then all heads were bared while by general impulse the National Anthem was sung. This was followed by a general hand shaking'.¹⁰⁷ After this the 'King's inspiring message to his Navy had just previously been posted and his Majesty's confidence was reflected in his Ever Faithful subjects in

¹⁰² Devon Federation of Women's Institutes, *Devon within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1993) p. 181.

¹⁰³ Imperial War Museum: 8521/1, Marjorie Laxton, 1984, BBC Radio Devon, Reel 1.

¹⁰⁴ A. H. Rousham, *Exwick during the Great War, 1914-1919* (Exeter: A. H. Rousham, 1920) p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁶ *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Exeter'.¹⁰⁸ A similar patriotic response was found in Cardiff where the crowds reached a 'high pitch of intensity' after hearing the news.¹⁰⁹ Pennell reflects that this incident was similar to a kettle that had reached boiling point, the 'crowds sang patriotic songs and cheered in a sense of relief once the declaration of war had been declared'.¹¹⁰

An anonymous columnist for another local newspaper *Devon and Exeter Gazette* reported that Exeter's main streets were 'full of bustle and excitement' after they had heard the news.¹¹¹ However, it is important to clarify the nature of excitement and what the label of excitement carries with it. Can excitement represent an enthusiasm for war? The very definition of what enthusiasm constituted needs further investigation because as Pennell argues the sight of a crowd cheering at the 'moment of announcement was not necessarily an indication of enthusiasm for war but a release of tension, a climax to a week of not knowing'.¹¹² Equally, Holger Herwig suspects that the euphoria present in the reactions of Vienna's population in August 1914 may have been what he describes as 'cognitive dissonance'.¹¹³ This was, in Herwig's view, a joyous release of relief after weeks of uncertainty and anxiety.¹¹⁴ However, David Monger is only partially convinced by Pennell's explanation that the singing and cheering of the crowds on 4 August may have been a release of built-up public tension.¹¹⁵ It is not entirely clear in this reading of these emotions as a release of tension why a 'great cheer rather than, say, a great moan or wail, would be the reaction'.¹¹⁶ Verhey has gone on to stress that the enthusiasm present in crowds in Germany can 'scarcely be cited as evidence of "war"

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *South Wales Daily News*, 5 August 1914, p. 6 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 39.

¹¹⁰ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 39.

¹¹¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

¹¹² Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 42.

¹¹³ Holger H. Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918* (London: Arnold, 1997) p. 35.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ David Monger, 'A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland By Catriona Pennell', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 24, 2 (June 2013) p. 308.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

enthusiasm'.¹¹⁷ In his essay on war enthusiasm, Roger Chickering references Thomas Raithel's analysis of urban attitudes in Germany which states that "war enthusiasm" depends on how you define the term.¹¹⁸ Raithel found examples of enthusiasm as 'passionate fervour' or 'diffuse joyful excitement'.¹¹⁹ Therefore in light of the evidence from Exeter's crowds, it is vital to clarify that the descriptions of enthusiasm or excitement as used by the correspondents does not necessarily denote an ecstatic desire for war present amongst the multitude of people. Instead, they seem to convey that the enthusiasm of Exeter's crowds was a presentation of their patriotism and a resolute declaration of support for Britain's intervention. This is also true of the sentiment of approval. The correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* wrote that 'Exonians were determined was proved by the audible signs of approval with which the news that Great Britain had given Germany until midnight to declare her intentions in regard to Belgium neutrality was received'.¹²⁰ It could be interpreted that the senses of approval and enthusiasm felt by the crowds of Exeter were informed by a sense of the moral position of Britain's cause. Nevertheless, the use of these descriptions by particular correspondents to define the reaction of Exeter's crowds does raise important questions as to what these observations signify in our understanding of the reactions to the war on a local level.

The specific nature of a crowd meant that it possessed its own distinct response to the outbreak of war: 'the crowds of 4 August 1914, in London and elsewhere, possessed many emotions'.¹²¹ The application of specific descriptions by observers to define how individuals and crowds responded to the war can help to understand the significance of these responses. It is important to reflect how the language used to define the reactions

¹¹⁷ Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, p. 97.

¹¹⁸ Chickering, "War Enthusiasm?" Public Opinion and the Outbreak of War in 1914', p. 204.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

¹²¹ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 42.

in these crowds and how these expressions of enthusiasm, excitement and approval were ideologically loaded descriptions. For instance, a columnist for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* observed after he had witnessed the behaviour of Exonians who participated in the farewell celebrations for the troops on 4 August that enthusiasm was ‘but a weak word to use in describing the scene, but it is sufficient’.¹²² Based upon the conduct of the citizens of Exeter, he went on to claim that the ‘average Britisher takes some time to arouse for his patriotism is not the kind that is on the surface. But it is there all the same and although he dislikes a scene, when once he is aroused there is no doubt about his patriotism’.¹²³ Accordingly, the patriotism exhibited by Exonians on 4 August led the columnist to proclaim that Exeter was ‘British to the back-bone, and during the past few anxious days has kept her feelings well under control, but last night she gave way to a patriotic outburst’.¹²⁴ An anonymous correspondent for the *Western Times* came to the conclusion after viewing Exeter’s crowds that the city had ‘fully lived up to the character of the centre of the patriotic West’.¹²⁵ To correspondents who witnessed these Exeter crowds, they observed that they were, in their opinion, reacting enthusiastically to the news of war and this enthusiasm was motivated by patriotism. This display of patriotism did not go unnoticed by Lord Fortescue who recorded in his diary for 4 August that in Exeter the ‘attitude & behaviours of [the] men & [the] people [was] quite satisfactory’.¹²⁶ He later explained in his memoirs for the war years that this was his reaction in relation to how both the men and the city’s population had responded to outbreak of war and the orders for mobilization.¹²⁷ It is evident that the patriotic manner in which Exeter’s citizens responded to the outbreak of war and the mobilization was deemed to be appropriate.

¹²² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ DHC: 262M/FD46, Lord Fortescue diary, 1914-1916, 4 August 1914.

¹²⁷ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, pp. 3-4.

In stark opposition were the rejoicings of Mafeking Night on 18 May 1900 which was an event that celebrated the relief of a small British garrison town from the Boer forces. However, the reports of these festivities in later years were transformed into depictions of patriotic riots and demonstrations celebrating the victory and Britain's empire.¹²⁸ In her section which discusses the legacy of Mafeking Night upon Edwardian Britain, Pennell suggests that the memory of the event was burned into the public consciousness, which was used as a 'cultural yardstick to remind the British public of the limits of acceptable behaviour'.¹²⁹ Sir Francis Acland, the Liberal MP for Camborne, wrote to the editor of *The Cornubian* on 11 August 1914 from the Foreign Office about the very matter of Mafeking Night. As a Civil Servant during the Boer War, Acland had observed how London's population had reacted during Mafeking Night and he had also seen how they had responded to the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914. Based upon what he had witnessed on both occasions, he argued that there was a 'great contrast between that time and this. There is very little "Mafeking" this time'.¹³⁰ Conversely, in light of the declaration of war in 1914, the hysteria of Mafeking Night was to be 'avoided at all costs'.¹³¹ Pennell does touch upon the idea that the descriptions of Mafeking Night acted as a warning. Hence, 'crowd behaviour in 1914 was not allowed to get out of control'.¹³² As a consequence, this meant that the 'descriptions of crowd reactions to the outbreak of war in 1914 were therefore not neutral'.¹³³ In this sense, she argues that the reports were 'ideologically loaded interventions in a debate

¹²⁸ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 42.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Sir Francis Acland, *Killerton, Camborne and Westminster: The Political Correspondence of Sir Francis and Lady Acland, 1910-29*, ed. by Garry Tregidga (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2006) p. 74.

¹³¹ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 42.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

about how people might and should behave'.¹³⁴ However, according to Chickering, the responses of crowds to the outbreak of war should be ‘understood in the light of their own political and cultural dynamics’.¹³⁵ Chickering references Christian Geinitz’s study of attitudes during the opening phases of the war in the German city of Freiburg to emphasise and explain the ‘apparent contradictions in collective attitudes, the simultaneity of enthusiasm and excitement about the war’.¹³⁶ Questions remain as to whether the attitudes of the crowds in Britain’s cities, as they were chronicled in newspaper reports ‘indicate mental dispositions or fleeting reactions? Could one be “anxiously patriotic” or “vigorously consternated” about the war?’¹³⁷ Through the descriptions of approval and patriotism, it is clear that some of Exeter’s crowds responded to the outbreak of war in a patriotic manner. The enthusiasm and patriotism described in the newspaper coverage of the responses of some crowds in Exeter is too important to ignore. Consequently, the choice of the specific wording used by contemporaries to describe these events should not be overlooked in favour of historians prescribing a label to bring together a wide range of responses to the outbreak of war.

Yet, in order to truly gauge how the British population reacted to the outbreak of war, it is vital to look beyond the crowds on 4 August 1914. Pennell observes that the nature of individual and collective reactions could vary from city to city, town to town, street to street.¹³⁸ Consequently, in order to measure the reactions of the county’s population to the outbreak of war, it is important to consider Exeter’s crowds as well as the reactions of Devonians across the county. There were individuals in Devon who were deeply anxious about what the declaration of war would mean. On 5 August 1914, Dorothy Holman noticed this when she visited a hospital in Exeter and the head district nurse

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Chickering, “‘War Enthusiasm?’ Public Opinion and the Outbreak of War in 1914”, p. 200.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp. 38-43.

informed Dorothy that they were ‘frightfully busy with premature babies caused by the shock of the war’.¹³⁹ As mentioned previously, the anxiety surrounding the prospect of war dampened the holiday season in Exmouth. Subsequently, the outbreak of war had a dramatic impact upon the holiday industry in some Devon resorts. It was also apparent that large numbers of visitors were anxious at the prospect and decided to cancel their ‘rooms at the various hotels and boarding-houses at Ilfracombe, and several visitors have already received telegrams calling them away’.¹⁴⁰ The *North Devon Journal* observed later in 1914 that the declaration of the war had undeniably ruined the most important month in the holiday season for which ‘the total loss to the town must have been many thousands of pounds’.¹⁴¹ Similar scenes were also noted in Newquay on 7 August where since the outbreak of war there had been an ‘absence of gaiety’.¹⁴² The holiday atmosphere of the August Bank holiday in the Cornish seaside resort had been ruined because the ‘people did not feel like amusement’.¹⁴³ Whilst the declaration of war had spoilt the holiday atmosphere for some individuals, there were some who simply oblivious of its presence. Gregory points out an example of ‘Miss E. Barkworth in Devon barely mentions it in her diary and spent August going to the beach and reading Dickens’.¹⁴⁴ He uses this as an example of the widespread phenomenon of ‘war indifference’.

James Thomas Rogers, a preacher from Plymouth, confided in his journal entry for 6 August 1914 that he was similarly concerned about the war and hoped through the power of prayer that God would ensure Great Britain’s survival through the conflict:

¹³⁹ DHC: 3830M/F9, Dorothy Holman, 5 August 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 36.

¹⁴⁰ *North Devon Journal*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

¹⁴¹ *North Devon Journal*, 31 December 1914, p. 7.

¹⁴² *Cornish Guardian*, 7 August 1914 as cited in Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, p. 86.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ University of Leeds: Liddle Collection: E. H. Barkworth Diary as cited in Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 33.

'What is before us God only knows, we are in his hands, it is too terrible for words, God grant that the contest may speedily be ended and bring our beloved country safely through'.¹⁴⁵ The sentiments of distress were felt by Ruth Whitaker in the East Devon village of Broadclyst as a result of the anxiety created by the war. She remembered that on the weekend after the outbreak of war a very old woman from the village said to her in conversation about the war: 'Oh, how exciting'.¹⁴⁶ Ruth replied that 'I'm not in the least excited ... [I am] horribly frightened!'¹⁴⁷ In fact, it was reported by one correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* that the crowds he had met in some streets of Exeter 'during the earlier part of the day were grave'.¹⁴⁸ Yet, from a review of these crowds he was adamant that in the faces of all the people he could 'read signs of sheer determination to see England through'.¹⁴⁹ Verhey argues that these sentiments of kinship were also apparent in Germany in the days before the declaration of war in that 'although there was little "enthusiasm" in these curious crowds, there was a sense of "community," of a shared fate'.¹⁵⁰ The population of France believed that they held a shared fate to defend France from German aggression under the imagined alliance of a sacred union of all French peoples otherwise known as the *Union Sacrée*.¹⁵¹

In some of the reactions from Devonians, there were present sentiments of relief to the news that war had been declared. Similarly, more than one reader outside the offices of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* expressed relief after reading the news of the outbreak of war.¹⁵² It can be argued that these reactions should be understood in the context that

¹⁴⁵ Plymouth and West Devon Record Office: 3010/1, Journal of James Thomas Rogers, 6 August 1914, p. 207.

¹⁴⁶ IWM: 3148, Ruth Whittaker transcript, 1977, p. 4.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, p. 74.

¹⁵¹ Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Providence: Berg, 1985) p. 324, P. J. Flood, *France, 1914-1918: Public Opinion and the War Effort* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990) pp. 16-24.

¹⁵² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

these individuals felt relief due to the fact that the uncertainty surrounding the European crisis had finally come to an end. These sentiments of relief were also felt by some Devonians away from the crowds. John Tindall, a sergeant signaller of the later named Sidmouth Volunteer Defence Regiment remembered that upon reading the declaration of war posted up in Fore Street, Sidmouth he bowed his head and said ‘Thank God’.¹⁵³ Yet, despite the different sentiments in responses to the outbreak of war, civic figures and local authorities were deeply concerned about how the county’s populace would respond to the news of war.

Arthur J. Reavell, the deputy Mayor of Barnstaple, appealed to the inhabitants of the town and the surrounding borough for calm: ‘In a time of great excitement like the present, it behoves every citizen to keep cool and free from panic’.¹⁵⁴ In particular, Reavell stressed that Barumites and the district’s population should not harbour food supplies: ‘A great injustice may be done to the poor, who are only able to purchase in small quantities, if the well-to-do section of the community make abnormal demands on the local supply of provisions’.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, in the lead up to the outbreak of war, the price of certain food supplies had dramatically increased. This situation was used to the advantage of the quarry workers of Trusham who were on strike. Their spokesman, Mr W. A. Bond used the steep rise in food prices in Plymouth to provide the strikers with the opportunity to vocalise their opposition to the prospect of war.¹⁵⁶ However, there were Devonians who did panic buy large quantities of food and coal, at which some shopkeepers admitted that the rushed frenzy for supplies was more profitable than the

¹⁵³ John Tindall, *The Sidmouth Volunteers: No. 9 Platoon, C Company, 1st Volunteer Battalion, Devon Regiment, 1914-1918* (Exeter: Eland Brothers, 1920) p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ *North Devon Journal*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Western Times*, 4 August 1914, p. 6.

‘Christmas trade’.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, when war was declared on 4 August 1914, local authorities in Devon were concerned about how the county’s populace would react to the news. As a result, their fears were to an extent validated because across all of Britain the news of the outbreak of war prompted the panic buying of food supplies. Subsequently, in the hope of alleviating this crisis, Devon’s elite used their influence to exhort to the county’s population to curtail the panic buying of food. At the same time, they attempted to use this opportunity to intermediate upon the uncertainty which accompanied the transition from peacetime to wartime and prescribe how the people of Devon should react to the news of the war. Sir James Owen pleaded with Exeter’s population that as they entered into the ‘unknown, our word to our fellow-citizens and fellow-Devonians is: Be steadfast; unafraid’.¹⁵⁸ Similar appeals were made by local authorities across Devon for the county’s population to consider the national interest and not hoard food supplies. The Vice-Chairman of Newton Abbot Urban District Council advocated that it should be ‘their endeavour to sink all personal selfishness in the great crisis, and all help one another’.¹⁵⁹ On the same day, Budleigh Salterton Urban District Council launched a similar appeal for co-ordinated restraint on panic buying of food supplies.¹⁶⁰ According to a correspondent for the *Western Times*, the food situation in Exeter by 6 August 1914 was ‘becoming serious’.¹⁶¹

At a special meeting of Exeter City Council on 4 August 1914, Owen argued that Exeter’s citizens needed to bear in mind that ‘it is not each for himself, but each for all, and that any disposition to alarm or panic may inflict hardships on our poorer brethren. I am quite sure that in appealing to the citizens in this way I do not appeal in vain, and

¹⁵⁷ Hoskins, *Devon and its people*, p. 162, Gerard Wasley, *Devon in the Great War, 1914-1918* (Tiverton: Devon Books, 2000) pp. 36, 44.

¹⁵⁸ *Western Times*, 6 August 1914, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

that, with a calm form, and a united form'.¹⁶² The concern at how the declaration of war would be received by the city's population was felt by the Exeter Constabulary. As a precaution against any disturbances that could arise from the responses to the outbreak of war, the city's police force issued six of their officers with firearms.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that there were individuals who sought to exploit the city's crowds waiting for news. During the 4 August, the Exeter Constabulary received eight cases of pick pocketing from persons in the crowd waiting in Exeter's High Street.¹⁶⁴

Yet, the civic figures in Exeter believed that it was their responsibility to reassure and provide a sense of direction to people after the declaration of war. Owen proclaimed to all the members at the council meeting that they were 'passing through the most anxious crisis in the history of this country, and one that has fallen on us with appalling suddenness. The past history of this city shows that it has never been wanting - nay more it has been conspicuous - every duty that lay to its hand when national need arose'.¹⁶⁵ Owen clearly appealed to their identities as citizens of Exeter to encourage them to place national interest before self-interest. He was confident that every citizen of Exeter would 'cheerfully undergo the sacrifices' that the war would require.¹⁶⁶ As guardians of civil order, the 'provincial patriots' attempted to restore calm in a time of deep crisis. At the same time, they sought to cement their influence upon the processes of mobilization. Indeed, Owen was clear that the mobilization process would entwine local and national identities in that they would prove themselves 'citizens of our great heritage, our King and our country'.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 2.

¹⁶³ DHC: Exeter City Council Minutes, Volume 2, 1914, p. 233.

¹⁶⁴ *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The military towns of Devon and the naval port of Plymouth did experience more concentrated activity as a consequence of the mobilization of troops.¹⁶⁸ According to Dalley, after the declaration of war ‘thousands of fishermen and other seafarers across Cornwall were soon issued with their call up papers and told to report immediately to Devonport’.¹⁶⁹ This was also the case for Devon’s fishermen and other seafarers based in Brixham and other fishing towns in the county. Plymouth resident, F. Ashe Lincoln remembered the arrival of the Naval Reserves into the city as they joined the Naval Reserves who were called up from Plymouth. In his recollection of 4 August 1914, he saw these ‘men flocking to report at Devonport Barracks, mostly accompanied by their tearful wives, hundreds of them, flocking down the streets’.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Reynolds recorded that it was a gloomy experience for him to watch the local Naval Reserves depart at Sidmouth Railway Station on 4 August. He described that amongst the crowd at the station he as well as those of the Reservist families ‘were the saddest – Lord, how sad we are’.¹⁷¹ In addition, another reason why Reynolds felt dejected at the sight of the mobilization of the Naval Reserves was that it was accompanied with a recognition to him that probably all of his ‘fishery works of years [would be] smashed, probably by this accursed international insanity’.¹⁷² When Lincoln was asked by the interviewer about the mood of the men in Plymouth on the 4 August 1914, he replied that they seemed ‘really quite chirpy and cheerful’.¹⁷³ He explained that the reason for their cheerful mood was that most of them were ‘going off to the Navy which they knew; they were either Naval reserves, or fishermen, or pilots’.¹⁷⁴ This personal experience helps to confirm Dalley’s observation as paraphrased by Pennell that these communities

¹⁶⁸ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, p. 87.

¹⁷⁰ University of Leeds: Liddle Collection, DF 148, Recollections relating to the Domestic Front: Transcript of Tape 916, Lincoln, F. A., 15 July 1993, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 192.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ University of Leeds: Liddle Collection, DF 148, Recollections relating to the Domestic Front: Transcript of Tape 916, Lincoln, F. A., 15 July 1993, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

were ‘used to sending their men away as reservists at times of national emergency, responded to the outbreak of war in 1914 more calmly as regular contact with the Army and Navy had instilled in them a readiness and willingness to fight when war came’.¹⁷⁵

The mobilization of troops and the Naval Reserves in Plymouth would help to explain the response of J. S. Wellington to the outbreak of war. In his diary entry for 4 August 1914, Wellington argues that based on his observations in Plymouth and Devonport there was ‘war fever everywhere’.¹⁷⁶ As a draughtsman for Devonport Dockyard, Wellington would have noticed a buzz of activity with the build-up of anticipation for the conflict in Plymouth, which was a key port for the Navy. However, it is important to clarify such a statement as it can be misleading, particularly as the term ‘war fever’ can be defined to describe those who were experiencing an ‘outbreak of irrationality’ where the war had overridden civilian concerns.¹⁷⁷ Yet, as the analysis of the descriptions of excitement and enthusiasm previously emphasized, it is important to remember how contemporaries defined and used these descriptive observations. The term ‘war fever’ can also be used to describe the how individuals had become involved in the hurried processes of mobilization that were taking place in the port before Wellington’s eyes. This was the case with the crowds in Exeter’s High Street where ‘war fever had taken hold of the people, who could be heard on all bands discussing the telegrams with the latest phase of the crisis’.¹⁷⁸ Reynolds also used the expression of ‘war fever’ to describe the behaviour of how some individuals in Sidmouth responded to the outbreak of war to which they would ‘get the war fever, see red, and are happy’.¹⁷⁹ In his opinion, the reason why these individuals got the ‘war fever’ was due to the fact that they were

¹⁷⁵ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p.55 as cited in Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, p. 87.

¹⁷⁶ PWDRO: 2173, Draughtsman at HM Dockyard, Devonport, private diary, 1913-1957, 4 August 1914, p. 8.

¹⁷⁷ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁸ *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 192.

fortunate not to have the ‘faculty of seeing too far in front’.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, the term ‘war fever’ is as ideologically loaded as the expression ‘War Enthusiasm’, in that it is important to understand the different connotations behind the description.

Yet, from examining Lincoln’s recollection it is also clear that the wives of the men were tearful at the sight of watching their husbands go off to war. This emotional display is important to consider alongside the cheerful send-off of troops in Devon on 4 August as part of the reactions to the outbreak of war and the consequential responses to an integral process of wartime mobilization. According to the *North Devon Journal*’s review of 1914, the most enthusiastic event of the year in South Molton was the send-off of the Yeomanry in which ‘many hundreds of townsfolk assembled in the Square, and a large number accompanied them to the railway station to bid them God-speed’.¹⁸¹ Similarly, the reception of the mobilization orders on 4 August was met with approval by Exeter’s crowds where the Devonshire regiment marched through the city on their way from Woodbury Camp to Exeter St David’s railway station. The *Western Times* recorded that thousands of Exonians in Exeter’s High Street gave the Territorials a great farewell celebration which produced a spectacle of national patriotism and local patriotism: ‘As the battalion (5th Devons) entered Queen-street the cry of “Good old Devon” was raised, and the men yelled response bespeaking of a hearty optimism’.¹⁸² Later that day during the procession of the 4th Territorial Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment through Exeter, it was recorded that the ‘excitement was intense, both in the ranks of the marching companies, and in the crowds lining the streets’.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *North Devon Journal*, 31 December 1914, p. 7.

¹⁸² *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

¹⁸³ Francis Thoday and Tom Anstey, *The 4th Devons: A History of the 4th (Territorial) Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment, 1852-1952* (Exeter: Wm. Pollard & Co. Ltd., 1952) p. 87.

As Gregory has pointed out, the presence of large crowds at railway stations to cheer on the departing troops was a display of enthusiasm which had ‘little to do with a real war’.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Pennell argues that the departure of troops at railway stations were ‘often described as enthusiastic, but many people were simply trying to give the soldiers a good send-off’.¹⁸⁵ At Exeter St. David’s railway station this was apparent as spectators rushed to the station ‘as the men went into the station patriotic songs were sung. “Are we downhearted?” was the query often raised, and the men chimed in with great gusto. “No!”’.¹⁸⁶ Likewise, Tiverton’s Mayor recorded on 5 August that it was a ‘thrilling scene’ to watch Tiverton’s population give a jubilant send-off to the Army and Navy Reservists at Tiverton railway station.¹⁸⁷ To give these reservist troops a good send-off proved to be a valuable opportunity for the ‘provincial patriots’ to extend and cement their influence. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the mobilization of troops and recruitment efforts became an important opportunity for the ‘provincial patriots’ to superintend the patriotism of the county’s population against their own patriotism. For instance, at the send-off of a company of 150 of the North Devon Hussars in Torrington on 4 August 1914, it was reported in the local news that the send-off was as a great demonstration with admirable addresses from Torrington’s Mayor and the local vicar.¹⁸⁸ In Ilfracombe, the Reverend H. M. Johnson preached to the departing Territorials to wish them God speed as they ‘represented the forces of Empire, and every man, woman and child in Ilfracombe would unite in giving them the heartiest send-off’.¹⁸⁹ However, at the same time as these ‘provincial patriots’ extended their influence upon the send-off of reservists in August 1914, there were other civic figures in the county who were concerned about the imagined fear of invasion.

¹⁸⁴ Gregory, Cronier, Verhey and Purseigle, ‘Railway Stations’, p. 29.

¹⁸⁵ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 227.

¹⁸⁶ *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ Gregory, *Recollections of a Country Editor*, p. 60.

¹⁸⁸ *North Devon Journal*, 31 December 1914, p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ *North Devon Journal*, 13 August 1914, p. 6.

The outbreak of war brought an escalation of fears that Germany would attempt an invasion of Britain. As a result of the growth of German imperialism, the fears of invasion had permeated into Edwardian culture. These were reflected in the novels of William Le Queux and Erskine Childers.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, in specific regions of Britain that were close to the French coast such as Kent, Sussex and Essex, these fears of invasion were even more heightened. In her article on invasion fears in South-East England in the autumn and winter of 1914, Pennell argues that the fear of an invasion on the Essex coast had become an ‘imagined reality in the form of detailed plans, evacuation routes and home defence measures’.¹⁹¹ Similarly, Grieves reveals that the precautions against a German invasion were also considered by local government authorities in the county of Sussex.¹⁹² These microhistory examinations have revealed that for people living on the South East Coast a German invasion was such a distinct fear that it seemed to be only a matter of time.¹⁹³ In Devon, these concerns were also felt by the county’s government authorities who proposed to mobilise Devon’s defences for such an attack. This included the use of boy scouts to watch the coastline and the enforcement of lighting restrictions in certain localities on Devon’s coastline.¹⁹⁴ On 10 August 1914, DCC announced that Devonians should take the necessary precautions to dim their lights in the evening. Correspondingly, in Plymouth in 1914, because of the fact that it was one of the key ports for the Navy, the windows of houses in the port were screened and any lights extinguished. On 8 August W. Eaves, a Plymouth resident described that he had

¹⁹⁰ Catriona Pennell, “‘The Germans have landed!’: Invasion fears in the South-East of England, August to December 1914” in H. Jones, J. O’Brien and C. Schmidt-Supplian eds., *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) p. 98.

¹⁹¹ Pennell, “‘The Germans have landed!’”, p. 96.

¹⁹² Keith Grieves, *Sussex in the First World War* (Lewes: Sussex Record Office, 2004) p. 35.

¹⁹³ Pennell, “‘The Germans have landed!’”, p. 103.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2005) p. 30

seen how trenches were being dug ‘all along the coastlines ... and this evening I was confronted by a barbed wire entanglement and a redoubt of sandbags’.¹⁹⁵

Consequently, the concerns and fears of attack and invasion had also brewed up a tense atmosphere of suspicion throughout Britain resulting in the need for its coastline to be safeguarded against any threat.¹⁹⁶ According to Panikos Panayi, this climate of Anti-German sentiment meant that the Germans living in the United Kingdom were alleged to be internal enemies.¹⁹⁷ It was this environment of suspicion and “anti-alienism” that meant that all Germans were enemy secret agents, which meant that ‘spy fever’ became a widespread phenomenon across the country.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, this spy fever and concern surrounding the presence of German nationals manifested itself in Devon. It was reported in Ilfracombe that some individuals had flung stones at the hotels in the North Devon seaside town that employed German waiters.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, Pennell reveals that Tremar resident Edrica de la Pole recorded in her diary from 8 August until 17 August that she had been told about ‘three different spies being caught in a remote area of East Devon’.²⁰⁰ At the same time, the fear of enemy spies had made some of Devon’s population raise questions about the Catholic communities in the county. On 7 September 1914, the Devon and Cornwall Presbyterian Union voiced these concerns in a letter published in *The Exeter Flying Post*. This declared that ‘the Catholic churches in the Westcountry through their commitment and allegiance to the Pope are aiding our enemies, the Catholic nations of Germany and Austria, and seek to undermine Britain’s

¹⁹⁵ PWDRO: Acc 511/1, Letter on outbreak of war, 8 August 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 47.

¹⁹⁶ George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) pp. 8-9.

¹⁹⁷ Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1991) pp. 153-162.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.153, Panikos Panayi, ‘The Destruction of German Communities in Britain during the First World War’ in P. Panayi ed., *Germans in Britain since 1500* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996) p. 113.

¹⁹⁹ John Travis, *An Illustrated History of Ilfracombe and Lynmouth* (Derby: Breedon Books, 1995) p. 183.

²⁰⁰ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 104, PWDRO: Acc 1306/22, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1914, 8-17 August 1914, pp. 220-229.

war effort'.²⁰¹ As a consequence of the supra-national authority of the Catholic Church across the nations of Europe, it was questioned whether the Catholic communities of Devon were loyal to the Protestant nation of Great Britain. However, Devon's Catholics were quick to respond to these allegations. The Blessed Sacrament in Exeter and The Sacred Heart in Paignton immediately published a rebuttal to these claims in several newspapers throughout the county. They emphasised that the Catholic Church in Devon had 'encouraged its parishioners to join in the defence of their nation and to spare neither effort nor blood for the protection of their beliefs'.²⁰²

These worries over spies and enemy sabotage escalated to fever pitch when these individuals were accused of crimes such as 'reconnoitring likely invasion areas or sabotaging telephone lines' and 'signalling from the coast to enemy ships'.²⁰³ For Lord Fortescue, the most pressing concern after the outbreak of war was the protection of vulnerable points within Devon. In his memoirs, Fortescue noted that the railway from Exeter to Plymouth was of vital importance to the war effort as it was used in the transportation of troops and material. Accordingly, Fortescue went to great efforts to find individuals such as special constables and in one instance a Rector with his party of Boy Scouts to protect and patrol particular places, including viaducts and tunnels along the Exeter to Plymouth railway line.²⁰⁴ Nonetheless, in response to Fortescue's efforts the military said that 'they cared little if the railways into Plymouth were interfered with as they had got all the troops they wanted into the fortress and could supply them by sea'.²⁰⁵ Therefore, despite Fortescue's concerns to safeguard these vulnerable points in Devon, it was clear that the military had prepared for the possible sabotage of the railway line from Exeter to Plymouth. Yet, Fortescue's concern reveals how seriously

²⁰¹ *Exeter Flying Post*, 7 September 1914.

²⁰² *Exeter Flying Post*, 17 September 1914.

²⁰³ David French, 'Spy Fever in Britain, 1900-1915', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 12, 2 (Jun 1978) p. 365.

²⁰⁴ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, pp. 7-11

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

he had considered the vulnerable points in Devon with his attempts to superintend the efforts to protect these susceptible locations. This perceived threat to the county from German aliens was an important circumstance for anxiety. Panayi revealed on 25 November that Alexander Forbes-Leith, Lord Leith of Fyvie had raised his deep concerns in the House of Lords about the protection of the entire British coastline.²⁰⁶ Leith argued that the entire county of Devon with its two coasts opposite the English Channel and Bristol Channel respectively should become a prohibited area.²⁰⁷ In his defence, Leith referenced that a mass meeting which took place in Torquay had passed a resolution for the county to become a prohibited area.²⁰⁸ Moreover, to reinforce how this was a perceived threat to national security he told the members of the chamber that the Chief Constable of Devon had arrested a large number of Germans in Torquay and the surrounding district.²⁰⁹

In his research on Anglican Chaplains during the Great War, Edward Madigan has suggested that the outbreak of the war was perceived by many religious figures to be a great opportunity for the Church of England to combat against the perceived decline in religious observance.²¹⁰ As the crisis escalated in early August, the Bishop of Exeter put forward a plea in the local press to all Devonians to ask the clergy of the Diocese to ‘urge, and the clergy and laity alike to offer, earnest and persevering prayer, both public and private, to God to avert, or at least mitigate, so appalling a calamity to mankind’.²¹¹ After 4 August 1914, the Bishop of Exeter described the outbreak of war to Devonians as the arrival of a tragedy. In his letter published in the Exeter Diocesan Gazette on 28 August 1914, Robinson was under no illusion that the war would bring great challenges

²⁰⁶ Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst*, p. 51.

²⁰⁷ Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, Fifth Series, Vol. 18, 25 November 1914, Column 137.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, Fifth Series, Vol. 18, 11 November 1914, Column 46.

²¹⁰ Edward Madigan, *Faith under Fire: Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 33.

²¹¹ *Western Times*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

which required prayer on an unprecedented scale to bring about ‘a speedy and honourable issue from the strife, and for lasting and solid peace amongst the nations’.²¹²

The call to prayer was also promoted by other members of the clergy within the Diocese of Exeter.

In his sermon in Exeter Cathedral on 9 August, the Archdeacon said that now was not the time to attempt ‘anything stirring, sentimental, or dramatic; it was not the place for patriotic appeal. But it was the time, and it was the place especially for humble, quiet, yet confident and trustful prayer’.²¹³ Reverend H. Avery of Holy Trinity Church in Barnstaple argued in his sermon on 9 August that to the Devonians who knew how to face facts, and who had imagination, the mere suggestion of war on a large scale was terrible: ‘Surely as such a time for earnest Christian people the call is for prayer’.²¹⁴ Indeed, as a consequence of the declaration of war, Devonians did turn to the Diocese of Exeter for spiritual guidance upon hearing the news that Britain had declared war on Germany. Throughout August, there were large congregations reported in several parishes within the county including Exmouth, Exeter and Barnstaple.²¹⁵ In Otterton, it was reported that the services for 9 August were very impressive ‘owing to the heavy cloud of war hovering over us’.²¹⁶ In his evening sermon, the Reverend A. G. Seymour proclaimed that this was ‘a time of testing for England – a time for all to show what manner of men they were’ and that it was also ‘a call to prayer for all those left at home’.²¹⁷ In Barnstaple, the Reverend F. Streey spoke to a crowded Barnstaple Parish Church with a large number of Territorials. He preached a more militaristic sermon, when he said that they: ‘Should pray to God to strengthen their hands for War, and their

²¹² DHC: 6610, *Exeter Diocesan Gazette*, 1914-1916, 28 August 1914, p. 119.

²¹³ *Western Times*, 10 August 1914, p. 3.

²¹⁴ *North Devon Journal*, 13 August 1914, p. 6.

²¹⁵ *Western Times*, 10 August 1914, p. 3, *North Devon Journal*, 13 August 1914, p. 2.

²¹⁶ *Devon & Exeter Gazette*, 14 August 1914, p. 6.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

fingers for the fight, to scatter the nation that delighted in blood, and that they might return home crowned with glory and honour'.²¹⁸ Like the Bishop of Exeter, the Bishop of Bristol in October had also issued an encouragement to the clergy in his Diocese to use the declaration of war as an opportunity to foster a religious spirit. He believed that the ministry should harness this time of stress and to shepherd anxious individuals back to the Church because these individuals would be looking for 'strength greater than their own. The Church holds the answer. It is Christ. Brethren, preach him as you have never done before'.²¹⁹ Correspondingly, in both France and Germany, it was recorded during August that there were an increased number of individuals who turned to religious institutions to seek a spiritual reflection upon the outbreak of war through the commentaries disseminated by the Protestant and Catholic churches.²²⁰

Through the preaching of sermons, the clergy of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations of Christianity reinforced how religion could act as a vital intermediary of the war experience.²²¹ According to Gregory, it was hoped that the war would awaken a revelation of 'Christian' instinct amongst the British people in order to usher in a better nature and 'an altruistic willingness to sacrifice oneself for the cause of righteousness'.²²² The Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, characterised the Great War as a crusade to reinforce that the conflict possessed an undeniable spiritual dimension. To further this interpretation, he believed that the

²¹⁸ *North Devon Journal*, 13 August 1914, p. 2.

²¹⁹ *The Record*, 9 October 1914 as cited in Madigan, *Faith under Fire*, p. 34.

²²⁰ Annette Becker, 'The Churches and the War' in J-J. Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Providence: Berg, 1985) pp. 188-189, Adrian Gregory, Annette Becker, John Moses, Patrick Porter and Jeffrey Verhey, 'Religious sites and practices' in in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 389-390, Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914*, p. 91, Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany, Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 73-75.

²²¹ Annette Becker, 'Faith, Ideologies, and the "Cultures of War"' trans. by John Horne in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 234-247, Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*, trans. by Helen McPhail (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

²²² Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 161.

Church of England could ‘best help the nation first of all by making it realise that is engaged in a Holy War, and not be afraid in saying so’.²²³ The rhetoric of Holy War was also promoted by the Bishop of Truro who argued that the ‘War was forced upon us but we could hardly doubt that God was chastising us for our sins … We were resolute to fight for our country, our freedom, our Empire, and our lives, until … we came through to the end’.²²⁴ It is also important to emphasize how the religious character of the war was defined through these sermons.

The Archdeacon of Exeter on 9 August reminded the congregation that the daily papers had said that nothing but a miracle would save the British population from civil war in Ireland. Yet, he argued that the outbreak of war was a miracle in which the danger of civil war had passed and that it was example of how God had moved in a mysterious way.²²⁵ Devonians, in his view, should not forget this and there should be thanksgiving: ‘thanksgiving that they were confident, thanksgiving for unexcited, cool-headed common sense, than which there was no greater gift in the time of emergency’.²²⁶ These comments were echoed by Reverend R. J. E. Beggis of St Mary Magdalene Church in Barnstaple as he believed that the peoples of Britain and Ireland were now ‘united together in agreement, to promote the common good of the whole community’.²²⁷ However, to accentuate a sense of British exceptionalism for which the ‘Britisher’ should be congratulated, Beggis continued by saying: ‘with his more phlegmatic and less excitable nature is viewing this peril with greater equanimity than is the case with

²²³ Albert Marrin, *The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1974) p. 139.

²²⁴ *Cornish Guardian*, 14 August 1914 as cited in Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, p. 92.

²²⁵ *Western Times*, 10 August 1914, p. 3.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *North Devon Journal*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

some other nationalities'.²²⁸ He also went to great lengths to stress that the people were not misguided about how they should respond to the news of war:

We realise the danger; we do not for one moment disregard the terrible prospect of a mighty war, with its awful death-tolls, and its shattering of fortunes; but we English are neither carried away by an excited and unreasonable jingoism, which thirsts for battle without counting the costs; nor do we suffer from the unrestrained and unpatriotic outbursts of anarchist or socialist demonstrations, which threaten to hamper, if not to defeat, the efforts of law and order - there is no need to confine Englishmen to their own homes after dark by application of Martial Law to our nation.²²⁹

It could be argued that Reverend Beggis's comments were similar to the responses and reactions of many of the county's residents towards the declaration of war. It can be seen that the Bishop of Exeter emphasised that the war was in fact a time of great trials and tribulations. These challenges required extra sacrifices from Devonians but the Bishop's comments emphasized the importance of resolve and responsibility during the war. Indeed, the Archdeacon of Exeter preached that it was a 'sense of the justice of the cause that alone could be inspiring the quiet, dignified, sober, determined spirit of our people'.²³⁰ The morality of Britain's position upon hearing the declaration of war had meant that 'once war was declared and the initial shock had worn off, the majority accepted that Britain's cause was "the Cause of the Right against Wrong"'.²³¹

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Western Times*, 10 August 1914, p. 3.

²³¹ DHC: 5242M/Box27/18, Fursdon Family Correspondence, 4 September 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 64.

To characterise the reactions of the societies of Europe as unanimously welcoming the war with enthusiasm is an oversimplification.²³² The societies of Britain, France and Germany were complex phenomena. Communities within a specific localised microcosm such as a hamlet, village, town, city or county, are complex and how individuals react to the declaration of war was dependent on a multitude of factors. Even a population of a county is a complex phenomenon which is a multifaceted interconnected framework of agencies. From examining the reactions to the county's population to the outbreak of war, it is apparent that there were a multitude of responses other than solely excitement. As Pennell posits in her research, the reactions to the outbreak of war were dependent on multiple factors.²³³ In wishing to emphasise the similarities with Devon, Dalley considered the reactions to the outbreak of the First World War in Cornwall. Dalley concludes that there were 'no nationalistic throngs of people greeting [the] news of the war in Cornwall's main towns'.²³⁴ Reynolds also thought that it was incredible that a 'war can be on at all in this peaceful and beautiful Cornwall'.²³⁵ It could be similarly argued that some of the Devon population felt a lack of interest in a war which was being fought overseas, because of the geographical location of Devon within the British Isles and the sense of its remote tranquillity. De la Pole recorded her frustration with the indifference amongst the population of Tremar in her diary on 8 September, that in the 'face of such utter indifference as people here show it is hard to believe there *is* such a thing as a war going on anywhere'.²³⁶ However, in light of the evidence from Devon's population, it appears that some of the population of the county reacted to the outbreak of war in a serious light and a mature manner. Equally, Connelly's assessment of the reactions to the war in Kent reveals that

²³² Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 227.

²³³ *Ibid.* pp. 227-229.

²³⁴ Dalley, 'The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', p. 106.

²³⁵ Christopher Scoble, *Fishermen's Friend: A Life of Stephen Reynolds* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2000) p. 597.

²³⁶ PWDRO: Acc 1306/22, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 4 September 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 219.

the views of the population of a county were a complex phenomenon as they did not respond to the news of war in a universal fashion.²³⁷ Therefore, it is apparent that an important reason as to why this study should consider the responses to the war on a county level is to reinforce that a county is not a monolithic structure.

How many Devonians responded to the war throughout the month of August was in a constant state of flux, dependent upon their feelings on any individual days. An example of this is in the diary of Teignmouth resident Dorothy Holman who recorded a multitude of different sentiments in how she reacted to the news of war and the presence of war in her life. For instance, on 3 August she recorded in her diary that she experienced grief towards the prospect of war, whilst on the 5 August 1914 she chronicled her feelings of excitement towards the conflict.²³⁸ Yet, Holman revealed in her diary on 25 August that she felt a sense of depression towards the war.²³⁹ Whereas, W. Eaves perceived that the war was about national honour and prestige which would bind the Empire together to defeat a common enemy. On 8 August, in a letter which to a friend, Eaves expressed a sentiment of resolve towards the war and saw the benefits of the conflict to the country: ‘Whether it be long or short, both you and I rejoice to have lived so long to witness the traditional esprit de corps of England thrust into life anew and to mark the impenetrability of the bonds which bind the Empire together. The old spirit lives, as we have always insisted and our prestige ... will now be ensured for another century at least’.²⁴⁰ On 11 August 1914, an anonymous correspondent wrote in similar sentiments of determination that the presence of troops in Exeter had reminded him of a ‘similar gathering which was held in the same building at the commencement

²³⁷ Mark Connelly, *Steady the Buffs! A Regiment, a Region, and the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 10.

²³⁸ DHC: 3830M/F9, Dorothy Holman, 5 August 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 227.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ PWDRO: Acc 511/1, Letter on outbreak of war, 8 August 1914 as cited in Catriona Pennell, “‘Why We Are At War’: Justifying War in Britain, 1914” in D. Welch and J. Fox eds., *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics and the Modern Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) pp. 104-105.

of the South African war'.²⁴¹ Yet, later in August, a correspondent for the South Carolina newspaper, *The State*, recorded a different response from the people of Devon towards the realities of war. Based upon the reactions of the people that he had met whilst visiting North Devon on 31 August, he came to the wider conclusion that the English were solemn and unemotional towards the war: 'Truly the English are a wonderful people in their quiet assurance and unemotional acceptance of what is inevitable. Everyone is very grave and silent'.²⁴² Like Best's and Holman's diary entries, the evidence from Devon reveals how the Devonian population went through a multitude of responses in adapting to the news and the reality of the outbreak of war. Within Devon, this challenging process of adaptation to the war was evident in recruitment efforts inside the county which were complicated by a distinct combination of factors.

Volunteering in Devon

After the declaration of war, the task to convince and sell the war to the British public began in earnest.²⁴³ This was evident in the volunteering and recruiting efforts that were generated across the British Isles.²⁴⁴ Keith Grieves argued that once war was declared the local elite in Sussex seized the opportunity to mobilize the county's resources:

In August 1914 the landowning social and economic elite of Sussex envisaged a central role in the county's preparations for war ... predicated on the belief that the paternalistic model of social relations had a relevance beyond the bonding of

²⁴¹ *Western Times*, 11 August 1914, p. 2.

²⁴² *The State*, 31 August 1914, p. 7.

²⁴³ Edward Madigan, 'Morality in Wartime Britain', <<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/morality-wartime-britain-video>> [Accessed 14 January 2013], Pennell, "“Why We Are At War”", pp. 95-107, James Aulich, 'Advertising and the Public Britain during the First World War' in D. Welch and J. Fox eds., *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics and the Modern Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) pp. 118-120.

²⁴⁴ John Morton, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain, 1914-1916* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The raising of the new armies, 1914-1916* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2007).

rural society – involving notions of privilege, duty and responsibility – to the process of transforming Sussex into a county at arms'.²⁴⁵

Like their Sussex counterparts, Devon's landowning social and economic elite, otherwise known as the 'provincial patriots', had similar intentions for turning Devon into a county at arms and to increase their authority in wartime. They envisaged themselves as holding a central role in the county's preparations for war and this was evident in the 'provincial patriots' involvement in recruitment efforts. The Mayor of Barnstaple, F. A. Jewell, spoke to the crowd at a recruiting meeting that he was confident that 'you men will uphold the fair name of Barnstaple, and that we shall all feel doubly proud of your achievements'.²⁴⁶ After Jewell's speech, the call for volunteers was sent out and in response 'upwards of 100 men of all classes at once came forward for enlistment in the National Reserve'.²⁴⁷ According to the *North Devon Journal*, this enlistment of 100 men was 'a fine example of Barnstaple's patriotism'.²⁴⁸

The Mayor of Tiverton recorded in his war memoirs that himself, the mayors of other towns in the district and many others through the autumn of 1914 and the greater part of 1915 were 'kept busy recruiting'.²⁴⁹ Gregory recalled that these open air recruiting meetings throughout the towns and villages of the district were 'full of enthusiasm'.²⁵⁰ He noted that one successful appeal to the men of these villages was modelled on the plea used by Garibaldi in the struggle for Italian independence in 1860 in order to convince the men of Italy to volunteer. Gregory proposed that he would offer 'not pay, or plunder, not even fame: you will have to face hardship, peril, possibly wounds, and

²⁴⁵ Keith Grieves, "Lowther's Lambs": Rural Paternalism and Voluntary Recruitment in the First World War', *Rural History* Vol. 4, 1 (1993) p. 68.

²⁴⁶ *North Devon Journal*, 13 August 1914, p. 2.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Gregory, *Recollections of a country editor*, p. 62.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

perhaps even death. It is the test of your manhood. Will you come'.²⁵¹ According to the Mayor's account, this appeal was very successful as he had convinced many of the best men in the country-side to volunteer. These comments from Tiverton's Mayor underline the validity of Adrian Gregory's argument that these recruiting meetings embodied both spectatorship and participation in which the 'cheering crowd was a vital part of the dynamic' of an individual's choice to enlist.²⁵² In his memoirs for the war years, Lord Fortescue, recorded that recruitment in Devon 'at first presented no difficulties'.²⁵³ However, there was some trouble in the matter of recruiting in the beginning weeks of the war in that 'men came in much faster than either accommodation or bedding or clothing or arms could be provided, and neither examining doctors nor the clerical staff could keep pace with the demands on their time'.²⁵⁴ Indeed, it was reported that many recruiting offices had become bottlenecks of recruitment after they had been swamped by floods of volunteers.²⁵⁵ Fortescue argued that for the first few weeks of August recruiting was as brisk in Devon 'as it was everywhere else'.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, despite the high hopes of the 'provincial patriots' for Devon to excel in volunteering and set a fine patriotic example for other counties in England, the reality of recruitment efforts did not reach their high expectations.

At a meeting in Tiverton on 1 December 1914, Fortescue revealed that after a review of recruiting results for Devon since the 4 August, the county's contribution to Kitchener's New Army was indeed disappointing: 'our totals at the end of two months compared badly with those of our neighbours'.²⁵⁷ He continued with a comparison to the larger population of Devon 'Somerset and Dorset together are nearly 100,000 fewer in

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 76.

²⁵³ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 16.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, pp. 72-73.

²⁵⁶ DHC: 1262M/L153, Fortescue's Speech in Tiverton, 1 December 1914, p. 1.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

population than we are: but where we raised 4,000 recruits they raised 6,000'.²⁵⁸ According to Fortescue's statistics, 1.4 per cent of the Devon populace had volunteered for military service. This was by no means a high proportion when compared to other counties: 'the recruits for the Regular Army alone amounted to 4.07 per cent in Warwickshire, and 1.44 in Dorset, for the period from August 4 [1914] to October 10 [1914]'.²⁵⁹ Fortescue revealed that the local press through 1914 had pointed out that 'Devon's percentage per the population in Kitchener's recruits worked out at about .6, whereas Gloucester's was double that, Birmingham's five times more, and Warwick's six times'.²⁶⁰ The statistics of recruitment figures in the South West up to the 10 October 1914 confirm that Devon's recruitment's rates were significantly lower and compared 'unfavourably with many other counties'.²⁶¹

Table 1:
Analysis of Recruiting by War Office up to 10/10/1914.²⁶²

Area	Population	Recruits Raised	Percentage
11th Area (Devon)	701,944	4,414	0.62
39th Area (Dorset)	223,266	3,219	1.44
32nd Area (Cornwall)	328,098	922	0.28
13th Area (Somerset)	388,847	3,194	0.82

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ 'Devonshire and the War' in R. Pearse Chope ed., *Devonian Year Book 1915* (London: The London Devonian Association, 1915) p. 41.

²⁶⁰ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

²⁶¹ 'Devonshire and the War', p. 40.

²⁶² DHC: 1262M/L153, Analysis of recruiting by War Office up to 10/10/1914, 10 October 1914, p. 2.

This use of comparison with recruitment rates in other counties was an important feature in the narrative of Devon's poor recruitment record. Devon's local press used these statistics as an important point in their criticism of Devon's recruitment efforts. A correspondent for the *Exeter Flying Post* on 5 September argued that based on these poor recruitment figures 'Devon had not woken up to its responsibilities so quickly as did the metropolis'.²⁶³ In light of evidence from the archive, there is great validity to the narrative that Devonians in 1914 had not woken up to their responsibilities of recruitment efforts for the war effort. On 8 December, Sir Trehawke Kekewich put forward the accusation that recruiting was not a priority in Devon and instead the county had its eyes on another prize: 'In Devonshire they had not done their duty; they beat Somerset at games but Somerset was beating them in the "war game."'.²⁶⁴ He went on to reference a legend within the county folklore of Devon in order to reinforce through this comparison the lacklustre response of Devon's men: 'an old tradition that when England was in difficulty or danger old Drake was heard beating his drum. He never was beating it so furiously as now; one could imagine him on the Hoe, calling the young men to come'.²⁶⁵

Yet, behind the figures for recruitment from the county, there needs to be a consideration of how recruitment worked on a local level inside Devon's parishes and districts. To gain a better picture of the recruitment rate in individual parishes of Devon, the tally for the separate areas will be examined and compared in order to gauge this against the collective recruiting figures for Devon. In the autumn of 1914, DCC passed a resolution for Lord Fortescue to send out a circular to the Mayor or Chairman of every city, town or parish within Devon to ask for the recruitment returns within their

²⁶³ *Exeter Flying Post*, 5 September 1914.

²⁶⁴ *Western Times*, 8 December 1914, p. 3.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

respective areas.²⁶⁶ By 7 November, Fortescue had received returns from 298 places which represented two thirds of the county.²⁶⁷ These returns revealed that the patterns of recruitment varied distinctly from district to district and from parish to parish. There were 149 parishes and other centres, which included the larger places of population, which had not sent in returns. Out of the 298 that had sent returns to Fortescue, there were 185 places where the number of men serving with the colours was pretty satisfactory.²⁶⁸ The total in which the proportion was small was 114.²⁶⁹ Some centres in Devon had done very well, and there were places from which something like 10 per cent of the population had enlisted.²⁷⁰ For instance, despite its small population, the East Devon parish of Rousden had done significantly better than other small parishes and nearly 35 per cent of its population had enlisted.²⁷¹ In comparison, under a half per cent of the population had enlisted in the West Devon parish of Broadwood Kelly. Other localities in the county had 3 per cent, 7 per cent, 9 per cent or nearly 10 per cent of their populations under arms. To accentuate this, Fortescue stressed the example of a single family from Barnstaple that had sent six brothers to join the colours. There were also similar instances recorded from families in Filleigh, Iddesleigh, and Morchard Bishop.²⁷² According to Gregory, the families who had more than one son who had enlisted became exhorted examples of ideal duty. These instances were promoted as an integral part of the system of voluntary recruitment. Gregory stresses that the publicity of these families as ‘patriotic’ examples was an integral part of the system of voluntary recruitment which was intended to shame families whose sons had not volunteered.²⁷³

²⁶⁶ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ ‘Devonshire and the War’, p. 41.

²⁷² *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

²⁷³ Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 89.

In Devon, Fortescue used these examples not only to shame these ‘unpatriotic’ families but also to embarrass the parishes of the county with low recruitment rates.

Nevertheless, there were some parishes of Devon where Fortescue argued that the ‘returns were by no means so satisfactory’.²⁷⁴ Fortescue revealed with a sinking heart that the number of parishes in the county where the ‘proportion is under 4 per cent is, I am sorry to say, more than a third of the whole [county]’.²⁷⁵ In point of fact, the parishes in Devon whose returns had shown that less than 4 per cent of their populations had volunteered, were named and shamed in the pages of the local press, where they were branded as ‘backward places’ or ‘black sheep parishes’.²⁷⁶ It is vital for this microhistory examination of Devon during the Great War to emphasize the importance of how individual parishes made up a larger picture of recruitment in the county. Connelly has also shown in Kent that inside a specific county there was social and cultural complexity which influenced recruitment efforts. Connelly has suggested that within Kent, the men in the northern industrial districts enlisted at a quicker rate than men in the southern agricultural districts.²⁷⁷ In order to identify the distinct nature of how individual parishes and districts within Devon contributed a specific number of recruits it is important to examine the recruitment efforts of the ‘provincial patriots’. During a public meeting in Dartmouth on 28 August 1914, the vicar of Saint Petrox, the Reverend A. E. Moys, said that from reading the Devon newspapers he believed that Dartmouth had not done enough to do their part in the war effort. He warned that if the ‘constituted authorities of this borough make a move very quickly some of us will take it upon ourselves to endeavour to save the good name of the town from disgrace’.²⁷⁸ In

²⁷⁴ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ *Western Morning News*, 10 December 1914, p. 4, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 December 1914, p. 2, *Western Times*, 15 October 1914, p. 2.

²⁷⁷ Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, p. 10.

²⁷⁸ *Western Times*, 28 August 1914, p. 8.

response to this, the Mayor of Dartmouth, Alderman W. Peck, denied that ‘Dartmouth was likely to prove a disgrace, and said that the town had contributed largely to the forces engaged in the war’.²⁷⁹ Other speakers at the meeting disagreed with Moy’s comments and deprecated his remarks. At the same time, the Mayor proposed that the authorities in the town should request for a recruiting agent to be sent to Dartmouth.

Frustrated with recruiting efforts at the South Devon resort of Dawlish in the autumn of 1914, Major-General Laye launched an attack on the tourism industry and the county’s population at a recruiting rally in Dawlish. He observed that ‘Devonians are too content away from the war in the sunshine’.²⁸⁰ Similarly, Pennell reveals that in late August, Lord Fortescue voiced his scepticism about the loyalty of the men from the North Devon town of Bideford. He said that it was his belief that ‘the traditions in the area were “all against war and anything connected with it”’.²⁸¹ Subsequently, Lord Fortescue received a letter from Stanley Jackson, from Oakleigh, Torrington, on 18 October in which Jackson had to regretfully admit that despite gaining 147 recruits for the regular army and Territorials after nine weeks recruiting, there were ‘hundreds still in this district that will not do their duty’.²⁸² This was also the case in Exeter.

On 14 December 1914, the Mayor of Exeter intended to raise a “Pals” Battalion of Exeter men within the Devonshire Regiment. During that week, he and other ‘provincial patriots’ in the city tried to stimulate the martial spirit of Exeter and induce men between 18 and 35 to enlist in this special company, which became entitled ‘Exeter’s Own’. Owen beckoned the men of the city to ‘do their duty as Englishmen and as

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Major General Laye, ‘The Nation’s Call’, *Dawlish Gazette*, 15 September 1914

²⁸¹ DHC: 1262M/L129, Lord Lieutenant’s Papers, 31 August 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 150.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

Britishers and Exonians to join “Exeter’s Own”.²⁸³ This was a branching appeal to a multitude of different identities: ‘England wanted men; she wanted Exeter men’.²⁸⁴ However, the result of Owen’s endeavours was more than disappointing. The correspondent of the *Western Times*, who witnessed Owen’s address, noted that the Mayor felt somewhat ashamed when he had to inform the crowd of the results of this call for recruits. They had hoped to recruit 250 men but only 8 had signed up.²⁸⁵ After hearing this disappointing result, one member of the audience shouted out to the Mayor, the damning accusation of ‘Shame’.²⁸⁶ In response, Owen retorted to the crowd that: ‘Yes it was a shame’.²⁸⁷ Like a father disappointed in his son’s efforts, the Mayor had hoped that by speaking to the men in the audience, they might reconsider and ‘during the coming week they would think the matter over, and would decide to do their duty’.²⁸⁸ Peter Simkins reveals that the creation of individual town and city “Pals” battalions’, like ‘Bristol’s Own’, took longer to raise than had been initially expected due to the fact that they faced competition from larger neighbours.²⁸⁹ In order to clarify to his audience the problems that he and others had encountered in Exeter, Owen referenced one example of the lethargy that was present amongst the men-folk of the city. After reading the ‘Your country needs you’ poster in the Mayor’s office window, the man said ‘“Let the ---’s want”’.²⁹⁰ Owen was in absolute disbelief over such apathy in this man’s attitude towards military service: ‘That was an Englishman! He probably had a very disordered idea as to what was at stake. He seemed to think that the country

²⁸³ *Western Times*, 14 December 1914, p. 2.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ Simkins, *Kitchener’s Army*, p. 90.

²⁹⁰ *Western Times*, 14 December 1914, p. 2.

was something that belonged to the Government, or to the rich people, and in which he was not concerned'.²⁹¹

The *Western Times* reported that despite the fact only eight of Exeter's men had enlisted that day there were 'still hundreds of eligible young men in Exeter whose ties and responsibilities are not sufficient excuse for their holding back'.²⁹² This incident in Exeter prompted the anonymous reporter to ask his readership: 'Is it that the young men of Exeter who are still holding aloof, do not possess the pluck and grit that is characteristic of Devon's sons, or is it that they do not, even yet, appreciate the seriousness of the situation of the position for their country and their homes, and the urgency of their help?'.²⁹³ Yet, this was not the only incident of indifference amongst Devon's men-folk towards recruitment efforts in the county. Another example of the lack of interest from Devon's men in recruitment efforts was from de la Pole when she initiated a recruitment campaign in the South Devon village of Kingston. In order to increase recruitment rates from the village, she promised to induce every man with five shilling bounties if they enlisted into the armed forces before 7 September 1914. Yet, despite her best efforts, Kingston's men remained unconvinced of the necessity to volunteer. She confided in her diary on 1 September 1914 that 'the people have not the remotest conception of what their War is or signifies'.²⁹⁴ According to the local constable, it was clear that 'nothing short of conscription' would bring the men of Kingston forward to join the colours.²⁹⁵ For the 'provincial patriots' including Fortescue and de la Pole, who were deeply invested in recruitment efforts, scenes such as this across Devon were humiliating.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ PWDRO: Acc 1306/22, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1914, 1 September 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 151.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

It can be argued that the prestige of Devon's history added to the high standards that were expected of the county's population in 1914. At a recruiting meeting in Ilfracombe on 17 December 1914, Sir Eric Soares, the former Liberal MP for Barnstaple, argued, using a discourse which evoked Devon's patriotism, that the 'county of Raleigh, Drake, Grenville and Buller – (loud cheers) – would not be backward when the vital interests of the nation are concerned'.²⁹⁶ Soares also revealed to the audience that he had been informed by some people that Devon had not done its share in terms of recruitment. He remained sceptical of this suggestion until he had made enquiries and he could hardly believe that it was true of Devon.²⁹⁷ Yet, despite the promotion of this illustrious heritage, the reality of recruitment efforts for the Army in Devon told a very different story. On 24 November 1914, Devon was given a damning verdict in the pages of the *Western Times* for its lack of participation in the processes of recruitment:

This county claimed to have taken not an inglorious share in building up the empire and it would be an everlasting reproach to Devon, if, when the history of this war came to be written their name appeared low down on the list among those who had made a contribution to the needs of this nation'.²⁹⁸

Yet, as Fortescue's survey suggests, there were some 'provincial patriots' who were successful in recruitment efforts in some districts of Devon. Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory, the owner of the JHC textile factory in Tiverton, also attended the meeting and added that he was glad that Tiverton 'had come out fairly well in recruiting ... [and] ... was proud of the fact that at his home every eligible man had gone'.²⁹⁹ Indeed, his textile

²⁹⁶ *North Devon Journal*, 17 December 1914, p. 6.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

²⁹⁹ *Western Morning News*, 2 December 1914, p. 6.

factory had released forty five men for the services since the 4 August and ‘many others wished to go, but they had been obliged out of consideration for other work people - women and children - who were dependent upon their work to ask them to remain at home’.³⁰⁰ For some ‘provincial patriots’, the choice whether or not to enlist in Kitchener’s army was obvious. According to John Wallop, he knew of no person in Devon who ‘did not look upon this war as a righteous war, and they were determined to bring it to a successful conclusion. This was essential to the well-being of the nation’.³⁰¹ However, Devon’s elite did struggle to convince all of the county’s population that this war was everybody’s war.³⁰²

In light of the low recruitment numbers and the apathetic responses from Devon’s men-folk, it was clear that there needed to be an explanation for why Devon’s recruitment rates were so low compared to other areas. The Chairman of the Barnstaple Recruiting Committee told his superiors on 9 November that recruiting levels were low in the area because ‘there has been a want of appreciation of the true situation, due to ignorance, all lack of loyalty and patriotism, and a disposition not to recruit unless it pays them well’.³⁰³ In fact, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander, the recruiting officer for North Devon, reported to the Town Clerk of Okehampton that he had faced considerable difficulty in putting up posters in the town and in ‘some instances after they had been affixed they had been torn down’.³⁰⁴ This vandalism of recruitment posters does add weight to the argument whether the low levels of recruitment in rural areas of county were a ‘symptom of opposition to the war’.³⁰⁵ Grieves proposes that incidents such as this early in the war were a ‘sign of otherness of the English countryside’ in that the removal of

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

³⁰² *Western Morning News*, 10 December 1914.

³⁰³ DHC: 1262M/L153, Devon Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 9 November 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 150.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 150.

what were deemed to be ‘unsightly recruitment posters’ was done in the ‘belief that their display was more appropriate on the London underground’.³⁰⁶ Alexander also revealed that he was shocked that some shop-keepers in Okehampton had asked for a small fee to put up recruitment posters in their shop windows: ‘It is difficult to believe, but apparently patriotism is not free in Devon’.³⁰⁷ Alexander’s experience also reveals that some Devonians sought to use the opportunities of recruitment efforts to their own benefit and individual survival.

Despite their best attempts to police the discourses of patriotism in Devon, the ‘provincial patriots’ in the county had to continually combat against the constant tension expressed by many Devonians between individual survival and national survival. On 8 December 1914, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander wrote to Barnstaple Town Council to request them to appeal to the men aged between 19 and 38 who worked on the roads, to join the New Armies because the repairs and maintenance of the roads could be done by older men.³⁰⁸ One of the council members, Mr Andrew asked if the inducements were sufficient for young unmarried men to enlist?³⁰⁹ The Chairman replied that there were the ‘inducements of patriotism, if nothing else’.³¹⁰ Mr Andrew argued that he did not quite see that patriotism was enough of an inducement. In response to Andrew’s statement, the Chairman was stunned and said, ‘thankful the rest of England was not of the view of Mr Andrew. If there was no patriotism we should soon get the Germans over here’.³¹¹ Andrew’s comments were interpreted as anti-patriotic and suggested that he sought excuses for others not join to military service. In fact, his comments were

³⁰⁶ Keith Grieves, ‘War Comes to the Fields: Sacrifice, Localism and Ploughing up the English Countryside in 1917’ in I. F. W. Beckett ed., *1917: Beyond the Western Front* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) p. 164.

³⁰⁷ DHC: 3248A/13/76, Okehampton Town Council Correspondence, 25 November 1914.

³⁰⁸ *Western Times*, 8 December 1914, p. 3.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

based on his attempt to seek the best interests of the potential volunteers. Andrew went to great pains to emphasize that he was not anti-patriotic but that the men who volunteered ‘should not be left, as formerly, to the mercy of the Poor Law, but be well provided for. We should get plenty of men if they were offered better terms. They did not see the force of coming forward without provision, in case of incapacity, being made for them in after life’.³¹² Yet, the commentary of the meeting by the *Western Times* argued that Andrew was making excuses for the men not to enlist. The Council members expressed their disbelief towards Andrew’s comments that there should be more inducements to enlist than just patriotism and argued that his comments were unpatriotic. The Reverend Dene could not understand why Mr. Andrew, or any Englishman for that matter, should speak in this way about military service: ‘The present war was a matter of life or death for us; the Germans had told us both in their books and speeches, that they meant to conquer England’.³¹³ Many of Dene’s friends and family had volunteered and there was scarcely anyone not doing something for their country ‘Many of them had thrown up good businesses, and several had either been killed or wounded. Let them think of their country, and their children’.³¹⁴ There were provisions in place for those who were wounded and killed but in Dene’s opinion, ‘everyone should come forward who was really able’.³¹⁵

In a frustrating climate of low recruitment rates, Dene misinterpreted Andrew’s concerns for Devon’s men-folk to enlist without consideration of the consequences. Andrew’s comments were clearly misconstrued as giving a licence for those who wanted to shirk from military service and were condemned as unpatriotic. Nevertheless, this prompts an important question as to whether the low recruitment rates in Devon and

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the apathetic responses are indicators that the county's population were opposed to the war. Another example of what could be misconstrued as anti-patriotic conduct was from Richard Miles, a road contractor from Barnstaple. On 9 December 1914, it was alleged that Miles had used obscene language against local recruiting officer, Sergeant H. Williman, who had attempted to convince his three eligible sons to enlist. It is clear from Williman's testimony that Miles sought to protect his three sons from the prospect of volunteering, since after he had refused Williman's request to see his sons, Miles became erratic. According to Williman, after he had left Miles's cottage, Miles chased after him down the road and threatened to assault him with a large stick. He said that Miles began to 'rave again, thrashing the wall with his stick remarking "That is how I will serve you if you come near my door again"'.³¹⁶ A witness who corroborated Williman's testimony heard Miles say that if any recruiting officer came to his house 'molesting him he would turn him outside the door'.³¹⁷

Pennell has probed the question as to whether the apathy in rural areas of the county was in fact an indicator of opposition to the war.³¹⁸ In de la Pole's opinion, the men in of Kingston were not reluctant to undertake military service because of opposition to the war but were ignorant of the situation. Sir Thomas Acland echoed these sentiments of obliviousness with the war when he had asked several men in the county if they would serve their country: 'I will go if I am wanted'.³¹⁹ According to Acland, they 'did not seem to realise the necessities of the case, and things must be made clear to them'.³²⁰ The Reverend Dr. John T. Trelawny-Ross, a resident of Ham near Devonport and a former vicar of Paignton, proposed that these responses were indicative of a feeling of unreality which was fostered in many of the localities across the county. According to

³¹⁶ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 1 January 1915, p. 2.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 150.

³¹⁹ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

Ross, there were a large number of Devon's men-folk who were reluctant to join until they were compelled because they thought 'that sooner or later they will have to go'.³²¹ There is a significant amount of evidence from Devon's archives to reinforce the argument that the low recruitment figures in Devon did not signify opposition to war, but that Devon's men-folk were not well informed about the war or were indifferent to joining the colours. Certainly, Trelawny-Ross suggested that due to the prevalence of such ignorance in Devon did the county's men-folk, 'God Forbid!', require a raid or raids on the East coast of Britain or 'a bad reverse on sea or land, to make the meaning of the war understood?'.³²² A reason to explain this logic is that the war was not perceived by some Devonians to be a life or death struggle for Britain or the Empire. White suggests that Devon's men were not 'unsympathetic to the needs of the military but did not realise the severity of the war'.³²³ This meant that the 'reality of the situation in rural areas tended to be more nucleated where the connection to national interests was often overshadowed by local needs'.³²⁴ This then brings to light the ineffectiveness of the rhetoric and discourses used by 'provincial patriots' in their attempts to negotiate and placate the tension between individual and national survival.

Conversely, a social group that was characterised to hold the balance in increasing recruitment numbers in Devon were the county's women. White discussed the role of Devon's women in recruitment efforts through the efforts of the White Feather Brigade.³²⁵ She came to the conclusion that despite the county's elite lending their authority to their campaign, the organisation found only limited support amongst

³²¹ PWDRO: 1305/10, 'Local Patriotism and Organisation in 1803 (By Dr. Trelawny-Ross)', 1914, p. 8, *Western Morning News*, 15 December 1914, p. 4.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 11, *Ibid.*

³²³ White, 'Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915', p. 666.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 662.

Devon's population.³²⁶ Yet, the role of Devon's women in the county's recruitment efforts was more substantial than White suggests. Violet Clutton recorded in her diary on 3 November 1914 that the county's women and girls could 'serve their country best by leading quiet lives, thus setting a good example of self-restraint and uprightness at home'.³²⁷ Yet, there were other women in Devon who proposed that women should take a more active role in recruitment efforts and the war effort. At a meeting of the Devon Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (DPRC) on 2 December 1914, Lady Amory argued that if Devon's women realised the importance of the war and the need for men to enlist in the armed services 'there would not be a single Devonshire woman who would keep her man from going'.³²⁸ Meanwhile, the county's women were also accused of sheltering their husbands and their sons away from military service. At a recruiting meeting in Ilfracombe on 11 December 1914, Sir Eric Soares believed that the reason for the county's poor recruitment figures in a few cases was because some mothers in North Devon were not willing to allow their sons to volunteer. Soares contended that whilst these sons can 'save all honour of a mother's love it was not for the welfare of the son: better a glorious death than a life of shameful ease'.³²⁹

The role of the Devonian mother was a crucial factor in alerting their sons to the fact that if they were to be killed it could mean the end of the family business. If they did not release their male shop-keepers into the services, their business would suffer. This case was proven when de la Pole noted in her diary on 1 September 1914 that she had decided to close an account with a Devonian shopkeeper because she had forced her son

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ DHC: 6258M/Box 1, Violet Clutton, Vol II, 3 November 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 82.

³²⁸ *Western Morning News*, 2 December 1914, p. 6.

³²⁹ *North Devon Journal*, 17 December 1914, p. 6.

to stay at home.³³⁰ As a result of this, she decided to buy goods from a woman who had a son that was serving in the armed forces.³³¹ Women, who were involved in family run businesses such as farming, understood that if their sons were to join up, the future of the family business would be in jeopardy. In his article ‘Local Patriotism and Organisation in 1803’, Trelawny-Ross argued that Devon’s men-folk in 1803 had made a glorious response compared to the lacklustre one by the generation of 1914. He argued that a feeling of unreality had been fostered amongst the county’s men about the significance of the war. This unreality was ‘inseparable from speeches by prominent men’ who had not been ashamed that ‘all their previous efforts have been against preparation for war’.³³² To which the ‘easy descent of the fence, compulsory sudden conversion, and torrents of eloquence cannot of themselves inspire conviction [for men to enlist]’.³³³ It must be acknowledged that there were some Devonians who did sacrifice self-interest for the national interest and joined the military. However, there were Devonians who did not see the importance of the war and there was a distinct tension between individual and national survival. At the same recruiting meeting at Ilfracombe on 11 December, Major Thomas argued that women were in a difficult position although they saw the necessity of sending their men-folk off to fight. He revealed that he had searched through Ilfracombe and found both ‘mothers and wives saying “we don’t want them to go but we won’t keep them back”’.³³⁴ He did not know whether the reason for their hesitation was ‘love of ease, or lack of definite aim, and some said they would go when compelled, but not before’.³³⁵ Moreover, Dorothy Holman was in a similar predicament. Upon hearing that her brother Tommy Holman, a

³³⁰ PWDRO: Acc 1306/22, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1914, 1 September 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 158.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² PWDRO: 1305/10, ‘Local Patriotism and Organisation in 1803 (By Dr. Trelawny-Ross)’, 1914, p. 9, *Western Morning News*, 15 December 1914, p. 4.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 10, *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *North Devon Journal*, 17 December 1914, p. 6.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

pre-war soldier, would be sent to the front in August 1914, both she and her mother became so deeply distressed that they burst into tears.³³⁶

Another social group in Devon who were accused in recruitment efforts of placing self-interest before national interest were the county's farmers. As a county without any large urban centres and a high percentage of rural workers, Devon's farmers represented a significant amount of the county's manpower.³³⁷ This meant that the 'provincial patriots' attempted to harness this source of manpower to bolster recruitment rates for the county. At a meeting of the Devon Branch of the National Farmers Union (NFU) on 2 September 1914 in Exeter, Lord Fortescue argued that if the war continued, many more recruits from agriculture would join the armed forces if 'they were sure that their wives and families would be well cared for whilst they were away'.³³⁸ Yet, during the autumn of 1914 with Devon's poor recruitment rates compared with other counties, it was clear that the 'provincial patriots' used the county's farmers as a scapegoat for this. As Gregory has suggested for contemporaries in London, Paris and Berlin the 'image of the urban "shirker" was, therefore, an exaggeration, which arose out of the relatively low rate of enlistment of young workers'.³³⁹ This was also true of the representation of the rural shirker present in the coverage of farmers in the local press in Devon and in speeches by 'provincial patriots'.

In Tiverton on 1 December 1914, Fortescue expressed his frustration with the county's farmers making excuses: 'My farmer friends can plead and plead with the truth that they have already made sacrifices. In various cases their sons have gone, many of their

³³⁶ DHC: 3830M/F9, Dorothy Holman, 2-3 August 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 160.

³³⁷ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 148.

³³⁸ *Western Morning News*, 2 September 1914, p. 8.

³³⁹ Adrian Gregory, 'Lost generations: the impact of military casualties on Paris, London and Berlin' in J. Winter and J-L Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 102.

horses have gone, many of their men are gone'.³⁴⁰ He explained that his farmer friends had insisted that they were engaged with both the war effort and food production: 'I do not suppose there is a farmer in the county who has not subscribed according to his means to one or more of the War Funds. Many a farmer, too, was taking his share of the extra public work imposed on most of them by the war. Yet, they asked how if the land was to be cultivated, and if business was to go on as usual, could they spare more labour, whether it were that of their sons or their labourers?'.³⁴¹ Nonetheless, Fortescue angrily declared that arable farmers should 'leave the wheat' and warned agriculturalists that they could not ignore the war because it was more important than meat.³⁴² He stressed the magnitude of the war in that 'if we cannot get men without injury to business, the business must be let go'.³⁴³ Fortescue also employed similar rhetoric in his prediction that if the farmers of Devon did not get their act together then the consequences of their procrastination would be extremely severe: 'Unless we find enough men and find them quickly we shall not win, and if we fail to win our fate will be the same as that of Belgium, businesses will disappear, there will be no farms to till and many a family now in comfortable circumstances will be wandering homeless and ruined, suppliant for food and shelter'.³⁴⁴ Fortescue was not the only Lord Lieutenant to express his frustrations with farmers by conveying to them the nightmare of a German invasion upon Britain. The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lord Harris, struggled with how to convey the importance of the war to Kent's farmers. At a recruiting meeting in Canterbury in early September, he pressed to them a scenario of life in Kent after an invasion: 'Was there anything so terrible to imagine than all the peaceful occupation of harvest being carried on with interruption, and the smiling dales and hills that made

³⁴⁰ DHC: 1262M/L153, Fortescue's Speech in Tiverton, 1 December 1914, p. 3.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Kent so beautiful, being tarnished by the horrors of invasion'.³⁴⁵ However, some farmers in Devon protested against the similar accusation that they were shirkers from their 'true' patriotic duty to serve in the military.

According to R. B. Sanders at a meeting of the Barnstaple branch of the NFU, North Devon farmers were experiencing a shortage of labour by 7 November 1914 due to 'farmer's sons and agricultural labourers being called up'.³⁴⁶ They suggested that the recruitment drive in the districts surrounding Barnstaple had been too successful in some cases which had left them without any help to work on the farms. However, this problem similarly seemed to occur in several districts across Devon, including Tiverton and Barnstaple. At a meeting of the Tiverton branch of the NFU, the chairman J. G. Pedlar had said that 'as far as the country districts were concerned farmers' sons had responded patriotically'.³⁴⁷ Moreover, he advocated that farmers respond to the allegations of shirking that were levelled against them. Pedlar proposed that they should form an association in Tiverton to assist with recruiting in the district. He declared to the meeting's audience that he strongly opposed conscription in principle but he believed that if young men had some form of compulsory training they 'would sooner attain their present object of trouncing the area-bully of Europe'.³⁴⁸ Conversely, a fellow member of the Tiverton branch, Mr. Lewis Mackenzie, wanted to avoid the allegations that farmers were shirkers and he declared that he was not 'prepared to admit that farmers had made greater sacrifices than other classes of people'.³⁴⁹ The responses of Devon's farmers' confirms Gregory's argument that contrary to the conservative mythology of "deep England", the rural population was 'generally unmoved by an

³⁴⁵ *Kentish Gazette and Canterbury Press*, 5 September 1914 as cited in Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, p. 10

³⁴⁶ *Western Morning News*, 7 November 1914, p. 8.

³⁴⁷ *Western Morning News*, 25 November 1914, p. 8.

³⁴⁸ *Western Morning News*, 2 December 1914, p. 6.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

impulse to volunteer: the archetypical urban activity of omnibus transport had doubled the volunteering rate of agricultural workers'.³⁵⁰

Nevertheless, in their defence, some Devon farmers said that they had kept their sons to help them bring in the harvest, despite appeals for their sons to volunteer into the armed forces. The priority of the harvest was evident in the responses of French farming families who were also concerned as to how the mobilization process would influence their business practices.³⁵¹ Moreover, German farmers were similarly anxious about how the loss of manpower and the purchase of their horses for the Army would impact the harvest of 1914.³⁵² Pedlar emphasised that Devon's agriculturalists were in a 'difficult and invidious position, having done all they could to meet the requirements of the country in allowing their horses, men and sons to go, and at the same time doing their best to increase the acreage of wheat in the county'.³⁵³ This, consequently, meant that patriotism in Devon was not limited to one single discourse of military service. In the eyes of farmers, their attitudes towards food production fed into a discourse of patriotism which justified their exemption from the military. At the same time, it also provided them with the means to continue their peacetime occupations, undertake their patriotic role in wartime and ensure the survival of their farms during the war. One example of this which Pennell references is from the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* on 11 December, where a farmer informed his son that if he enlisted he would have to sell the cattle. Placed in this difficult position, the newspaper argued that food production for the nation during the war could be interpreted as a patriotic act.³⁵⁴ Consequently, in

³⁵⁰ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 81.

³⁵¹ Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, pp. 13-17.

³⁵² Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007) p. 20.

³⁵³ *Western Morning News*, 25 November 1914, p. 8.

³⁵⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 11 December, p. 13 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 150.

Devon there were multiple discourses of patriotism which went beyond a jingoistic application with a militaristic lexicon.

Pedlar believed it was not Devon's country districts that were to blame for low recruiting figures. Instead, it was the thousands of men in the urban centres of Britain who were to blame because they had disregarded the war to watch big football matches which should have really had 'pressure brought down on them'.³⁵⁵ Consequently, this tension between the contributions made by the town and the country is evident within recruitment efforts in Devon. At a meeting of the Newton Abbot branch of the NFU held on 3 December 1914. The Newton Abbot branch chairman argued that there should be no further call for recruits from the agricultural districts because the 'world could not go on, nor could the troops be supplied, without the man behind the plough'.³⁵⁶ Yet, despite the importance of food production, Fortescue believed that in Devon there should be a 'generous emulation between us all as to which shall show the best example of self-sacrifice and patriotism and let us make haste to fill up the ranks of our County Regiment'.³⁵⁷

Fortescue had received criticism from farmers who argued that they had engaged with the war effort. At the same time, they questioned how they could continue farming the land without their sons and agricultural labourers. Nevertheless, within Fortescue's public addresses at the recruitment rallies and other civic events, he insisted that the sacrifices made by farmers were simply not enough. Fortescue believed that the only economy that the farmers were concerned about was their own businesses. Therefore, for rural areas, the 'provincial patriots' faced significant trouble to convince Devon's

³⁵⁵ *Western Morning News*, 25 November 1914, p. 8.

³⁵⁶ *Western Morning News*, 3 December 1914, p. 6.

³⁵⁷ DHC: 1262M/L153, Fortescue's Speech in Tiverton, 1 December 1914, p. 3.

farmers of the importance of serving their country overseas. Yet, there needs to be a consideration of whether the low recruitment figures in Devon for the New Army, instead reveals a willingness of the county's population to join the Navy.

In his examination of recruiting in Cornwall in 1914, Dalley reveals that Cornwall's farmers were hesitant to join the Army but were more willing to join the Navy.³⁵⁸ The Cornish newspaper the *West Briton* reported that there were places in Cornwall in which the calls for the army were 'unheeded by youths and young men who are really anxious to join the Navy'.³⁵⁹ It could be argued that the strength of the naval tradition in Cornwall was also true of Devon. In many instances, Devon's military patriotism was defined through its naval past with figures such as Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh to epitomise the heroism of Devon's men-folk. This was also evident at a recruiting meeting at Ilfracombe on 17 December 1914 where Councillor C. P. Filling from Bristol expressed a hope to the men in the audience that they as 'men of Devon would keep up the old traditions of the county'.³⁶⁰ Consequently, recruitment campaigns for both the Navy and Army in Devon 'turned naturally to their civilian roots and regional history for a tradition to inspire loyalty'.³⁶¹ In certain localities on the Devon coast, this was also true.

In the South Devon fishing town of Brixham, the recruitment campaign for Kitchener's Army and the Territorial Forces had been good. However, the correspondent for the *Western Times* argued that it was the Navy for which 'Brixham would do the greater

³⁵⁸ Dalley, 'The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', pp. 102-103.

³⁵⁹ *West Briton*, 7 September 1914 as cited in Dalley, 'The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', p. 103.

³⁶⁰ *North Devon Journal*, 17 December 1914, p. 6.

³⁶¹ Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 84.

recruiting'.³⁶² This inclination to join the Navy rather than the Army was shown on 19 November 1914 when the *Western Times* carried the story that the recruiting drive for the Royal Naval Reserve in Brixham had been very brisk to the extent that the young fishermen of the town had responded with 'exceptional fervour'.³⁶³ This had led to a shortage of fishermen, which the fishing industry claimed would result in them suffering and that 'many smacks being compulsorily kept on the moorings'.³⁶⁴ In fact, the attempts to convince Devonians to join the Army did face severe competition from the recruitment efforts of the Navy and Marines.³⁶⁵ This is confirmed in the *Western Times* which reported in late November 1914 that enrolling for the Navy in Devon was 'progressing steadily'.³⁶⁶ This report was informed by the Navy and Marines Recruiting Office (NMRO) in Exeter which proudly proclaimed that it had received an average of twenty-five recruits per week since the outbreak of war.³⁶⁷ This meant that from 4 August until the 30 November, Exeter's NMRO recorded a total of 425 recruits. The strength of the naval tradition in both Cornwall and Devon led many to believe that this could explain why both counties had low recruitment figures for the Army.³⁶⁸ It was the perception of this naval tradition in Cornwall which led many to believe that the number of recruits from Cornwall into the Navy surpassed that of 'any other county in the United Kingdom in proportion to its population'.³⁶⁹ Indeed, due to the perception of this strong naval tradition in both Cornwall and Devon, it was believed that 'the two counties had supplied more men to the Navy than the whole of the rest of England'.³⁷⁰

³⁶² *Western Times*, 8 September 1914, p. 6.

³⁶³ *Western Times*, 19 November 1914, p. 2.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ C. T. Atkinson, *The Devonshire Regiment, 1914-1918* (Exeter: Eland Brothers, 1926) p. 55.

³⁶⁶ *Western Times*, 30 November 1914, p. 2.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ Dalley, 'The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', pp. 102-103.

³⁶⁹ *West Briton*, 14 September 1914 as cited in Dalley, 'The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', p. 103.

³⁷⁰ *North Devon Journal*, 10 December 1914, p. 2.

Yet, this patriotic boast was not based on the reality of recruitment in both of these counties. Lord Fortescue wished that this belief for both counties was true but he did not agree that this suggestion was accurate for either Cornwall or Devon.³⁷¹ At a recruiting meeting in Tavistock on 4 December 1914, Fortescue announced that an unspecified London newspaper had published an article on recruitment which contained a section on recruiting in Devon and Cornwall. He argued that the reflection cast upon Devon and Cornwall in this anonymous paper was ‘outrageously unjust’.³⁷² Fortescue revealed that both counties had found 500 men and boys for the Navy since the beginning of the war which was to him ‘a respectable contribution’.³⁷³ Yet, notwithstanding this respectable contribution to the Navy, Fortescue believed that it was ‘simply nonsense’ to claim that Devon and Cornwall had found more men for the Navy than the rest of England.³⁷⁴ He disputed this suggestion in more damning terms by declaring that to make this argument for both Devon and Cornwall was a ‘perversion of the facts’.³⁷⁵

It appeared to Fortescue that to use this line of argument to explain the reason for the low recruitment figures in Devon or Cornwall was in fact ‘only an excuse for their not having done better in general recruiting’.³⁷⁶ However, it is difficult to pin point the exact number of recruits into the Navy for the period from 4 August until 30 December 1914. In the majority of the newspaper reporting for recruiting in Devon, it is clear that the recruitment figures are combined for the Army, the Navy and Territorials. An example of this was when Lord Fortescue spoke on 23 November 1914 that Devon had recruited another ‘5000 for the regular army and navy’.³⁷⁷ He does not provide a distinction between how many were recruited for the Army or for the Navy. Fortescue

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *North Devon Journal*, 10 December 1914, p. 2.

³⁷⁷ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

admits on several occasions during 1914 that he found it very difficult to gain the recruitment statistics for the Navy in Devon. Another example of this difficulty is evident in his review of recruiting for 1914 in which Fortescue states the recruitment rates for the Navy were more of a rough guess rather than a definitive figure: ‘for the Navy say 197 (at Devonport only 141)’.³⁷⁸ Therefore this suggestion has merit, in light of the fact that it is difficult to clarify the exact number of recruits from Devon into the Navy since August 1914. Yet, despite this, it is clear that low recruitment figures had significantly damaged Devon’s patriotic reputation. At the same time as considering recruitment, it is also important to consider the other forms of mobilization taking place in the county during 1914.

The Cultural/Political and Economic Mobilization of Devon

From the onset of war, the ‘provincial patriots’ sought to encourage the Devon populace to assist in the processes of mobilization and to emphasize participation this in their broadcasted discourses of patriotism. Lord Fortescue in his public speeches revealed that he had to argue strongly with Devonians against the catchword of ‘business as usual’. To him, all the connotations associated with that term had been detrimental to the war effort.³⁷⁹ At a meeting at Castle Hill in Exeter on 23 November 1914, Fortescue suggested that if more farmers’ sons and shopkeeper’s sons would enlist the processes of mobilization would be more successful:

He should like to also see more farmers’ sons come forward. It was said that the call was to get more land providing food, and therefore tilled, and that hands were wanted for this, but the circumstances had somewhat altered since such a call was first raised. Tradesmen and

³⁷⁸ ‘Devonshire and the War’, p. 40.

³⁷⁹ *Western Morning News*, 7 December 1914, p. 3.

shopkeepers' sons ought too, to come forward in larger numbers, and he believed both in regard to these callings and the land, they might avail themselves more to women labour and the labour of older boys so that men could be released.³⁸⁰

Another example of cultural/political mobilization can be seen in the employment of the language of sacrifice which was based on a religious lexicon. This was evident on 28 September 1914 when the Bishop reaffirmed the sentiments of fidelity, solemnity and endurance: 'The war comes to us all as a call to extra sacrifice which must be faced ... It is my belief that this time of anxiety is awakening far and wide a new spirit of helpfulness and self sacrifice'.³⁸¹ The Anglican clergy in Devon argued that the war required great prayer and a new spirit of helpfulness to overcome its great challenges.³⁸² This language of sacrifice was applied alongside patriotic sentiments by public figures in their speeches, including Fortescue: 'it is by sacrifice only that our ends can be obtained: sacrifices in which we must all join, which no selfishness must tempt us to shirk; sacrifices in which those have influence must set an example'.³⁸³ This example from a local speech adds authority to Gregory's proposition that during the Great War there were economies and languages of sacrifice. However, as Gregory argues the problem with this economy was the 'practical arbitrariness of the expenditure of the central currency in that economy: blood'.³⁸⁴ By understanding the war in financial terms, this economy of sacrifice should have been a proportionate and balanced one. Anyone who avoided their fair contribution towards the economic system within this war culture was deemed in the same terms as being a shirker of tax. In theory, by suggesting a practical economy of sacrifice, it was intended that this should be a

³⁸⁰ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

³⁸¹ DHC: 6610, *Exeter Diocesan Gazette*, 1914-1916, 28 September 1914, p. 127.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ DHC: 1262M/L153, Fortescue's Speech in Tiverton, 1 December 1914, p. 1.

³⁸⁴ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 113.

'universal tax upon the population; [however] in practice it was potentially divisive in terms of region, class and occupation'.³⁸⁵ Along with the cultural/political mobilization of Devon, it is important to consider the economic mobilization of the county in 1914.

An important form of economic mobilization in 1914 was the creation of charities related to the war effort. The British population was in fact, more involved in philanthropic activities than recruitment efforts.³⁸⁶ Dalley suggests that in Cornwall there was a 'real willingness among Cornish people to help the war effort in many other ways than volunteering to fight'.³⁸⁷ He concludes that Cornwall's patriotism was more humanitarian than militaristic:

Belgian refugees were taken in to be looked after; funds to raise money for the families of soldiers and sailors were set up and raised considerable sums of money, whilst women were often quick to form themselves into local committees to produce items of clothing for soldiers at the front.³⁸⁸

This was also the case in Devon. In 1914, there was a great flourishing of charities because fund-raising and charitable relief were important activities amongst individuals and communities in the county.³⁸⁹ Local committees and organisations were created on the initiative of Devon's notables such as Lord and Lady Fortescue and the Mayor and Mayoress of Exeter to demonstrate their involvement with the war effort. The

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Ian Beckett, *Home Front, 1914-1918: How Britain Survived the Great War* (Kew: The National Archives, 2006) pp. 108-110, Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986) pp. 158-159, 774-775.

³⁸⁷ Dalley, 'The Response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War', p. 106.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ Ralph Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918: Being a short account of the part played by Tavistock and Neighbourhood in the Great War* (Tavistock: Jolliffe & Son, 1919) pp. 82-95, Wasley, Devon in the Great War, pp. 70-71.

mobilization of women into activities and charitable efforts related to the war effort was of vital significance to the county's elite were noteworthy examples of what Paul Ward defines as 'prominent patriotism'. According to Ward, 'prominent patriotism' was an evident component in the involvement of women in charitable efforts during the war. As a consequence of this, their engagement with charitable efforts provided a distinct 'recognition of citizenship emerging from their patriotism'.³⁹⁰ This was also evident in the section of Fortescue's memoirs dedicated to the role of women during the beginning months of the war. He references the Queen's appeal for the women of England to knit socks and belts for servicemen in the armed forces: 'This was a wise move for though many socks were [so] badly made that they were useless except to put over the breech action of the rifles as [a] mud guard it gave occupation to numberless restless women: 5000 pairs of socks and 1500 body belts were sent to Lady Fortescue in six weeks'.³⁹¹ Christopher Capozzola argues that knitting was an important part of the processes of mobilization.³⁹² This was because of the fact that it was publically lauded as an 'inclusive form of volunteerism that all women could undertake and the knitting woman provided a powerful image of a female citizen fulfilling her wartime obligations'.³⁹³ Similarly, knitting was also understood in France as a form of feminine mobilization. Indeed, the women and girls of France took to knitting as 'an act of patriotic sacrifice'.³⁹⁴ This was also true of children who were encouraged to fulfil their wartime obligations through knitting. The children of Hunshaw Church of England National School in Barnstaple sent a parcel on 16 December which contained "sixteen pairs of socks, five long mufflers and eight pairs of mittens together with cigarettes to the value

³⁹⁰ Paul Ward, "Women of Britain Say Go!": Women's patriotism in the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 12, 1 (2001) p. 38.

³⁹¹ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 17.

³⁹² Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 83.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000) p. 79.

of ten shillings" to the soldiers of the Devonshire Regiment, via the Mayoress of Exeter'.³⁹⁵

The significant increase in the number of charities and fundraising activities during the war reflected the popularity of philanthropy as a form of social mobilisation which produced significant consequences for social relations.³⁹⁶ Philanthropy was perceived by families and individuals on the Home Fronts of the belligerents to be an appropriate response to the calls for sacrifice and support the war effort.³⁹⁷ It was also a poignant connection to combatants serving overseas.³⁹⁸ It must be considered that the 'provincial patriots' saw the opportunity of how charitable activities could provide a means to declare their patriotism. Within the conditions on the Home Front, fundraising helped to reinforce a sense of community identity amongst like-minded individuals whatever their background in society (farmers, public officials, factory workers and civilians generally) as they felt that they were contributing to a greater cause.³⁹⁹ In that respect, local charitable groups, whatever their focus, created a 'nexus of activity for the war effort that tied civilian volunteers imaginatively to the war itself'.⁴⁰⁰ Consequently, charitable activities were motivated by both local and national levels of patriotism. An example of this was the Devonshire Patriotic Fund also known as the Devon Patriotic Fund (DPF) which was a manifestation of county identity, county patriotism and county humanitarianism. Created on 8 August 1914 under the initiative of Earl Fortescue, the highly popular DPF was formed to manage the relief and assistance of the wives and

³⁹⁵ North Devon Record Office: 3073CEEL, Huntshaw C. E. National School, Barnstaple, School Log Book, 1893-1915, 15 December 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 75.

³⁹⁶ Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely, 'Introduction' in A. Borsay eds., *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: The Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain, c.1550-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007) p. 3.

³⁹⁷ Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) pp. 177-202, Darrow, *French Women and the First World War*, pp. 77-81.

³⁹⁸ I. F. W. Beckett, *The Great War, 1914-1918*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007) p. 383.

³⁹⁹ Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) p. 30.

⁴⁰⁰ Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War*, p. 181.

families of the Regulars of the Army, the Navy, the ‘Reservists and Territorials belonging to the County of Devon, and of the sick and wounded’.⁴⁰¹ In light of the popularity of this charity along with several others in Devon it is clear that the county’s patriotism had a strong humanitarian dimension. Moreover, Rebecca Gill argues that humanitarian politics with the notion of ‘moral’ citizenship was ‘based upon voluntary action was now elevated to the level of national politics and equated with patriotic service’.⁴⁰² Hence, charity was an important form of economic and political mobilization which held an important significance to both religious and secular people.

This was evident in the first urgent opportunity for private philanthropy was the arrival of over a hundred thousand Belgian refugees seeking sanctuary in Britain in the autumn of 1914.⁴⁰³ In the South West, the care of the Belgian refugees was first undertaken by a committee which was created in September 1914 who appealed to the public for funds and offers of accommodation. The following month a woman representative from Exeter was sent to London, returning to Exeter with 120 Belgians.⁴⁰⁴ According to Fortescue’s memoirs, the appeal for the Belgian Refugee’s had produced £450 within a fortnight of the Committee’s creation, with ‘offers of many homes and a Miss Andrew sister of a solicitor in the city was sent to London. She was energetic and kindhearted, though lacking ballast. She returned with 150 refugees who were promptly placed with benevolent people and by the end of October the numbers had risen to 800’.⁴⁰⁵

Another example of the strength of fund-raising in 1914 is that it recognised and encouraged the participation of children on the Home Front. In his study of

⁴⁰¹ TNA CHAR 4/15 WAR CHARITIES ACT 1916: List of Registers, Cheshire (Maple)-Devon (Exeter), Devonshire Patriotic Fund, 1916, p. 745.

⁴⁰² Rebecca Gill, ‘Calculating Compassion in War: The “New Humanitarian” Ethos in Britain, 1870-1918’, University of Manchester, PhD Thesis, 2005, p. 171.

⁴⁰³ Marwick, *The Deluge*, p. 83.

⁴⁰⁴ Wasley, *Devon and the Great War*, p. 46.

⁴⁰⁵ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 26.

Hertfordshire children during the First World War, David Parker demonstrates that the involvement of schools with wartime charities ‘represented a new attitude towards community affairs’.⁴⁰⁶ As the war continued, ‘charities began to recognise that children were particularly effective publicity agents and fund-raisers’.⁴⁰⁷ Pennell reveals that children became active participants in the ‘war effort, not only through education and the singing of patriotic songs in assembly but by the variety of relief efforts’.⁴⁰⁸ Pennell suggests there were other activities that local schools in Devon could participate in the war effort. For instance, the boys of the Holy Trinity School in Barnstaple on 4 September 1914 collected ‘blackberries to make jam to send to the “Jam Committee” of their local Distress Fund’.⁴⁰⁹ These also engaged in which included ‘writing letters to wounded soldiers, holding sales and concerts in school premises, and even closing the school completely to allow the billeting of soldiers’.⁴¹⁰

Conclusion

The reactions to the outbreak of hostilities on 4 August 1914 in Devon were no less complex than they were in other parts of the country. However, Devon’s population based in specific localities within the county reacted to the news of war with different responses and emotions, which largely reinforces the validity of the arguments that Pennell has suggested in her work. However, the findings of this chapter do not entirely support the proposal put forward by Pennell concerning the reason behind the enthusiastic reactions of 4 August in some crowds across the United Kingdom and Ireland. The enthusiasm and excitement present in the Exeter crowds were not necessarily joyful releases of relief. These descriptions of enthusiastic reactions from

⁴⁰⁶ David Parker, *Hertfordshire Children in War and Peace, 1914-1939* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2007) p. 69.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 75.

⁴⁰⁹ NDRO: 1903C/EEL, Holy Trinity Boys’ School, Barnstaple, School Log Book, 4 September 1914 as cited in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 75.

⁴¹⁰ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 75.

Exeter are evidence of neither a bloodthirsty desire for war nor an enthusiasm for war in a jingoistic sense. Instead, the enthusiasm present in the coverage of the correspondents who had witnessed the enthusiastic reactions from some Exeter crowds during 4 August 1914 defined these responses as manifestations of the crowds' patriotism to support Britain during a time of uncertainty. A crowd is not a cohesive phenomenon as there will be individuals who will express their own specific reaction to the news of war rather than follow the example of others in the crowd. Yet, the description of 'war fever' in Plymouth has become synonymous with 'war enthusiasm' and has not been analyzed on its own merits. 'War fever' can carry other meanings than the jingoism and naivety that is associated with the term 'war enthusiasm'. The evidence from Devon has reinforced the apparent contradiction of responses present in Exeter's crowds and the ideologically loaded nature of the descriptions of 'war fever', patriotic enthusiasm and excitement cannot be ignored. Chickering emphasizes that despite the progress of most recent substantial works on reactions to the war there is still an 'air of hesitancy and inconclusiveness [that] hovers over the question of popular responses in Germany and elsewhere to the outbreak of war'.⁴¹¹ To try to pinpoint British popular responses to the outbreak of war raises more questions than it answers. Instead, Chickering argues that such a range of sentiments that 'seemed contradictory – war enthusiasm, anxiety, and panic – could not be parts of a single volatile complex of reactions'.⁴¹² Therefore, it is important to remember that the reactions to the declaration of war in Devon, both collectively and individually, were part of a diverse tableau of evolving emotions and sentiments in response to the outbreak of war.

The Anglican Church in Devon received the news of war in 1914 in a serious manner but also saw the opportunity to extend its influence by claiming the war possessed a

⁴¹¹ Chickering, "War Enthusiasm?" Public Opinion and the Outbreak of War in 1914', p. 203.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 208.

religious character. The research from Devon's rural districts has confirmed the suggestion made by Pamela Horn in that rural communities greeted the declaration of war with 'a mixture of relief that the long weeks of rumour were at an end and nervous apprehension as to what lay ahead'.⁴¹³ At the same time as the declaration of war, the mobilization of the Army and Naval reserves in Devon helped to give a release to the uncertainty of the crisis. Crowds and individuals who had anxiously waited could respond in a patriotic way to the send-off of the county's regiment to war. On 4 August 1914, in Exeter several members of the crowd shouted as the 4th Devon Regiment passed with 'Up with the cream and down with the sausage!'⁴¹⁴ By 1914, Devon was renowned for its dairy industry and its dairy products like Devonshire cream. By defining Devon's patriotism through the distinctly local product of Devon cream against the German sausage helped to define the war on a local level. Therefore, local identities ran at the core of the mobilization process. It is clear through the application of these local cultural codes, which are specifically linked to Devon, to stress that 'Victory would belong to the local community as well as the Nation'.⁴¹⁵

Devon's elite, otherwise described as the 'provincial patriots', sought to use these main symbols of local identity to mobilize the county. Like the Sussex elite, the 'provincial patriots' sought to transform Devon into a county under arms. Notwithstanding some early successes with enlistment, recruitment efforts in Devon were not entirely successful. Despite the intention of the 'provincial patriots' for Devon to excel at recruiting, the results from the various parishes across the county were mixed, ranging from a commendable contribution of manpower to an extremely poor contribution. This meant that authorities on both 'local and national level were concerned about Devon's

⁴¹³ Horn, *Rural Life in England in the First World War*, p. 24.

⁴¹⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

⁴¹⁵ Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below the nations', p. 101.

recruitment returns'.⁴¹⁶ In light of national developments, Devon's recruitment record was similar to that of Leicestershire, which was a 'serious civic embarrassment'.⁴¹⁷ In a letter to the *Western Morning News* in the autumn of 1914 written under the synonym of Devonian, one resident pointed out that whilst 'we all sing and shout "Glorious Devon" but is it not humiliating to know, so far that not one in every hundred of the population in the county have volunteered their services'.⁴¹⁸ Moreover, Kent was stigmatised like Devon in the local and national press for the 'poor contribution which she had made to Kitchener's army'.⁴¹⁹

It was clear in the minds of Devon's 'provincial patriots' that the apathy and general lack of interest in the war in certain regions of the county was an embarrassment to their reputations. Yet, White revealed in her research that there was a distinct discrepancy between the responses to recruitment efforts between the rural and urban areas of the county. However, the evidence has shown that there were indifferent responses to recruitment efforts in urban areas of the county such as Exeter and Plymouth as well as in Devon's rural districts. Devon men-folk were failing in their duty to enlist and the consequence of the low enlistment rates from the county was reflected in the demography of the battalions of the Devonshire Regiment. By April 1915, the rural 9th Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment comprised of only 'eighty local men and was forced to fill up with Londoners and Midlanders'.⁴²⁰ This also occurred in Kent for although the 1st Buffs regiment from Kent overwhelming comprised of men from Kent in 1914, the statistics for the 8th Buffs reveal that 'it was as much a London, and

⁴¹⁶ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 150.

⁴¹⁷ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 88.

⁴¹⁸ PWDRO: 1305/10, *Western Morning News*, 1914.

⁴¹⁹ *Kentish Gazette and Canterbury Press*, 5 September 1914 as cited in Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, pp. 10-11.

⁴²⁰ Clive Hughes, 'The New Armies' in I. Beckett and K. Simpson eds., *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) p. 103.

particularly Surrey, unit as a Kent one'.⁴²¹ By 1915, Simkins revealed that the 'four counties of South West England (Devon, Dorset, Cornwall and Somerset) provided only eleven battalions between them' when compared to the counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire which had raised twenty five and thirty three Service battalions respectively.⁴²²

Nonetheless, Devon's elite struggled to convince all of the county's population that the war was everybody's war.⁴²³ The constant negotiation that the 'provincial patriots' had to endure in recruitment efforts throughout Devon created frustration. It is clear that the rhetoric of paternalism rang hollow to such a high degree that many Devonians did not have any conception of what the war was. By looking beyond the White Feather Brigade, it is clear that Devon's women were active participants in the volunteering process. Furthermore, there are examples of women who hindered the recruitment process in the county. However, the concerns of local businesses and families overshadowed the mobilization processes for war. Individual survival for family and local businesses was more important than national survival. Yet, this argument pervaded among the responses of Devon's population and the 'provincial patriots' faced an uphill battle in their attempts to convince Devonians of the importance of national survival.

Nevertheless, the frustrations of 'provincial patriots' who levelled accusations of shirking against these individuals do not reflect a lack of patriotism in Devon. Through the discourses of 'self-mobilization' disseminated by Devon's elite, it was hoped to control how the population should behave and clarify to them their roles in wartime. However, the discourses of patriotism, 'self-mobilization', and sacrifice broadcast by

⁴²¹ Connelly, *Steady the Buffs!*, p. 12.

⁴²² Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, p. 71.

⁴²³ *Western Morning News*, 10 December 1914.

the ‘provincial patriots’ rang hollow for many Devonians and in some cases failed to address the tension between individual priorities and national ones. It has been demonstrated in this chapter and will be shown in the other chapters of this thesis that there were multiple discourses of patriotism and sacrifice in Devon which were not purely driven by militaristic sentiment. This was revealed in the other mobilization efforts in the county where charities experienced great success and individuals outside of the requirements of military service contributed to the war.

Looking back at the end of 1914, it was clear that the tension between individual survival and national survival was not resolved by the ‘provincial patriots’ and this proved to be detrimental for some forms of mobilization. Based on the low recruitment figures and the sceptical responses from some of the county’s male population in 1914, Fortescue was afraid that ‘Devon had nothing to be proud of … in the matter of recruiting and it was time they applied themselves to a new effort to make up for their shortcomings of the past’.⁴²⁴ It was under this ethos that the ‘provincial patriots’ attempted to apply themselves to reinvigorate their role in recruitment efforts and the mobilization of consent in all of Devon’s districts and parishes. On 24 November 1914, Colonel Moore Stevens hoped through the work of the DPRC that ‘Devon would rise again to that position that she had occupied in the past, and to show that they could do in the present what they had done before’.⁴²⁵ Similar sentiments were echoed by Fortescue who hoped that recruitment efforts across Devon in 1915 would ‘be pushed more diligently, for more men are badly wanted’.⁴²⁶ Yet, Devon’s elite remained hopeful that the situation about recruitment would improve in 1915 which corresponds to the intensification of the conflict for Britain and other belligerent nations.

⁴²⁴ *Western Times*, 24 November 1914, p. 5.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ ‘Devonshire and the War’, p. 41.

Chapter 2:

The totalization of the conflict?

1915

Introduction

By the winter of 1914-1915, the war of military movement had ended in failure and on the battlefields of Western Europe and Eastern Europe the armies of all the belligerent nations became locked in a stalemate.¹ Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia ‘faced with the problem of how to regain the initiative and to maintain a commitment to the principle of attack when confronting the terrifying reality of decisive firepower’.² This led to the military forces of all the belligerents applying ‘rising levels of violence yet failing to try to terminate the impasse’.³ It was the escalation of violence that helped to create a further intensification and totalization of the conflict. Reflecting upon the raid by German Zeppelins on the seaside town of Yarmouth and the sinking of the battleship HMS Formidable off the Devon coast in Lyme Bay in January 1915, Plymouth preacher James Thomas Rogers noted in his journal on 19 January 1915 that these attacks ‘may be described as fiendish murder as they have no effect upon the operations of the war’.⁴ As part of the ‘totalizing’ dynamic of the war, along with the frustrating lack of progress in the war on the land and pressure from radical nationalists, the German government ‘declared in February 1915 that the waters around the British Isles were a “war zone” in which all ships would be sunk without warning’.⁵ This escalation culminated in the sinking of the cruise liner RMS Lusitania off the coast of

¹ David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2004) pp. 44, 99.

² James McMillan, ‘War’ in D. Bloxham and R. Gerwarth eds., *Political Violence in Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) p. 42.

³ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 99.

⁴ Plymouth and West Devon Record Office: 3010-1, Journal of James Thomas Rogers, 1884-1927, 19 January 1915, p. 214.

⁵ Alan Kramer, ‘Combatants and Noncombatants: Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 195.

Ireland on 7 May 1915, which added significant credibility to the accusations and representations put forward in the atrocity propaganda perpetuated by the Allied powers.⁶ The news of the sinking prompted Tremar resident Edrica de la Pole to write in her diary on 8 May that ‘Everyday this War becomes more hideous’.⁷ Furthermore, when Albert Best of Teignmouth had gained more information about the Lusitania’s fate, he wrote in his diary on 10 May that the news was ‘very distressing’ to him.⁸ The sinking of the Lusitania also heightened the anger towards German communities in Great Britain and led to rioting in some of Britain’s cities against German and Jewish communities.⁹ John Horne and Alan Kramer note that atrocity accusations were a central feature of the war cultures in all the belligerent societies that emerged in 1914-15.¹⁰ Indeed, they suggest that perhaps the ‘most important of the war cultures was to polarize collective identities between the positive, communal identity of each nation (and its allies) and the demonized enemy’.¹¹ Events such as the bombardment of the seaside holiday town of Scarborough in 1914 and the sinking of the Lusitania were focal points along with the ‘horrific accounts of rape and sadistic violence’ in the narratives of atrocity propaganda.¹² Hence, atrocity propaganda reached its intensity in 1915 as these depictions ‘began to spread more widely’.¹³ In particular, Adrian Gregory emphasizes that German atrocities against British civilians possessed ‘more resonance, and had received more intense and detailed press coverage’ than atrocities in Belgium.¹⁴

⁶ John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) pp. 292, 294, 296, Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 62.

⁷ PWDRO: 1306-23, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1915, 8 May 1915, p. 128.

⁸ Albert Best, *The Diaries of Albert Best: A resident of Teignmouth: Part 3, 1st January 1914 to 9th September 1920*, ed. by Alan Best (Torquay: Alan Best, 2009) 10 May 1915, p. 22.

⁹ Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1991) pp. 229-230, Gregory, *The Last Great War*, pp. 235-238.

¹⁰ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914*, p. 291.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Susan R. Grayzel, ‘Women and Men’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 265.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Adrian Gregory, ‘Britain and Ireland’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 406.

Both the escalation of violence in 1915 and the stalemate on the battlefield had immediate ramifications for the civilian populations of Britain, France, Germany and the other belligerent nations.

The stalemate on the battlefield ‘quickly triggered the basic mechanism that drove home-front mobilization’.¹⁵ However, Roger Chickering points out that due to the unprecedented nature of the conflict both civilian and military leaders in Britain and Germany found themselves in an environment of great disorientation and uncertainty.¹⁶ Through solutions which emerged from improvisation, the existing productive capabilities of the belligerent economies reorganized and responded to the intensification of the conflict and the prospect of prolonged conflict.¹⁷ Yet, there was a discrepancy in the results of the initial processes of ‘self-mobilization’ which relied on conviction and self-persuasion to convince individuals to participate in the war effort. This was true in Devon. Earl Fortescue, the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, suggested, in a speech on 13 February 1915, that Devonians ‘might bestir themselves a little more in some quarters’ to adapt and re-organise themselves to the needs of war effort.¹⁸ At a meeting of the Recruiting Committee for South Devon in Newton Abbot on 18 March 1915, Fortescue stressed to Devon’s elite that they should intensify their efforts in order to persuade the county’s population to the call of self-mobilization. In his view, this could only be achieved by abandoning the policy that the business of the nation could continue as usual: ‘Business as Usual was all right in the early stages of the war, but what one wanted to realise now that the present business of the nation was the war and

¹⁵ Roger Chickering, ‘World War I and the Theory of Total War: Reflections on the British and German cases, 1914-1915’ in R. Chickering and S. Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat, Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 38.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-53.

¹⁸ *Western Times*, 13 February 1915, p. 3

that everything else must give place to it'.¹⁹ Indeed, Fortescue believed that some of the responsibility for the weakness of recruitment efforts in certain quarters could be blamed on the individuals, who 'in the early days of the war gave the recommendation of "Business as Usual"'.²⁰ However, the signs of the 'totalizing logic' of the conflict were becoming ever more apparent to Devonians. This was reflected in the sermons of the Anglican clergy in the Diocese of Exeter.

In his letter for Lent on 22 February 1915, the Bishop of Exeter said that Devon's populace were 'already at every point in touch with peril, loss, bereavement and public solitude'.²¹ These comments were later echoed in his Easter Day address on 5 May 1915 when he remarked that there was no escape from the shadow of war.²² Yet, the Anglican clergy in Devon used the war to extend their influence on the county's population 'at a time when, due to the extraordinary circumstances of war, they would be especially open to spiritual guidance and religious ministration'.²³ At the same time, it was reported in the local press that the JHC textile factory had celebrated the completion of its first 18 pound shell on 23 July 1915.²⁴ Consequently, the company adapted its production line to commence mass production of these shells on 14 August 1915.²⁵ As a result of this successful transition to munitions production for the war effort, an anonymous local man felt such a sense of local pride in the industrial mobilization of the JHC textile factory that he wrote in the *Tiverton Gazette* that it was 'a great satisfaction to many non-combatants [like himself] to feel that Tiverton is thus

¹⁹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 19 March 1915, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²¹ *Western Morning News*, 5 February 1915, p. 7.

²² *Western Morning News*, 5 May 1915, p. 8.

²³ Edward Madigan, *Faith under Fire: Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 57.

²⁴ Tiverton Museum: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 23 July 1915, p. 163.

²⁵ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 14 August 1915, p. 164.

helping'.²⁶ The escalation was also evident in the other efforts of the 'provincial patriots' during 1915. However, it is important to question, in light of the experiences of self-mobilization in 1914, as to whether the intensification of the processes of self-mobilization in 1915 in Devon was successful.

This chapter covers the year 1915. Firstly, there will be an exploration of the changing strategies in Devon towards recruitment efforts. This will take into account the recruiting marches, otherwise known as route-marches, organised by recruiting authorities and Devon's elite. These marches reveal not only the effectiveness of recruitment efforts on a local level they also present the complex relationship concerning Devon's population in particular localities and the reception of the 'provincial patriots' appeals. The promotion of national and county unity was an important aspect in the recruiting speeches of the 'provincial patriots' to convince Devonians to fight for their local communities. Nevertheless, the stark contrast between the rhetoric of county unity and the inconsistent reality of recruitment efforts in Devon continued to linger in 1915. This shows that there were limits to the success of self-mobilization in the volunteering ethos of recruitment in Devon. At the same time, there will also be a reflection on recruitment efforts for the Royal Navy.

Furthermore, there will be a consideration of the charities and philanthropic efforts in the county during 1915. This will be split between the experiences of war charities and the charities that existed before 1914 in the county, which were dedicated to local causes. Behind the success of certain war charities in Devon, it became clear that some charitable efforts facilitated upper class tribalism amongst some of Devon's elite. Yet, this section will reveal that this process of self-mobilization found great success across

²⁶ *Ibid.*

the county. The ingenuity and simplicity of some forms of charitable donation resonated with the humanitarian sensibilities of many Devonians and this added to the popularity of these forms of participation with the war effort. It can be argued that Devonians outside the requirements of military service viewed that charitable work became linked to notions of patriotism and duty. This form of humanitarian politics provided a means for some Devonians on the Home Front to claim ‘moral’ citizenship in the wartime community.²⁷

Additionally, the organisation of Devon’s rural economy to accommodate the needs of the war effort will be investigated. This will include the introduction of local war agricultural committees across the United Kingdom. There will be a critical reflection of the debates by Devon’s farmers surrounding manpower and food production in 1915. The county’s fishermen faced the same debates along wartime restrictions in some areas of Devon’s coastline and their compensation case against the Admiralty. Finally, Devon’s tourism industry during 1915 will be scrutinized. In light of the emergence of a discourse of wartime morality, the idea of taking a holiday was deemed to be a counter-productive, amoral and unpatriotic activity. Nevertheless, the businesses which made up Devon’s holiday industry took to heart the motto that business could continue as usual despite the existence of war. Yet, the 1915 season for the holiday industry brought great trials with some businesses being more concerned with their own survival than the survival of the nation.

To look at 1915 is important because it is widely thought to correspond to the totalization of the conflict amongst Britain, France, Germany and the other belligerent nations. For a local examination, it provides an opportunity to apply further scrutiny to

²⁷ Rebecca Gill, ‘Calculating Compassion in War: The “New Humanitarian” Ethos in Britain, 1870-1918’, University of Manchester, PhD Thesis, 2005, p. 171.

the success of this intensification of ‘self-mobilization’ in the county and the application of this in the processes of mobilization by the ‘provincial patriots’. It also gives us a valuable insight into the nature of how individuals in Devon responded and participated in the processes of totalization on the Home Front. This chapter continues to question the effectiveness of some of the languages which expressed mobilization in the county and the constraints of self-mobilization in Devon. During 1915, recruitment drives in Devon were stepped up because the year symbolised a chance to begin efforts anew and more intensively within the voluntary system of recruitment by Devon’s elite. Conversely, a study of Devon’s unique holiday industry in 1915 presents a counter-point to these examinations and provides a better understanding of an industry that was deeply troubled by what the war would represent towards the survival of their businesses. Similarly, farmers and fishermen were hesitant about the intensification of the ‘totalizing logic’ of mobilization. Therefore, the tension between individual priorities and national ones continued to haunt the efforts of the ‘provincial patriots’ in 1915. Despite continuous attempts by them to reconcile this tension, it is clear that the languages which expressed self-mobilization could not reconcile this dilemma. The responses of some Devonians to the appeals from recruitment officers, ‘provincial patriots’, the Admiralty and other authorities reveal how pertinent a factor individual survival was to them. The calls to self-mobilization were simply not answered by all Devonians and drastic action had to be taken in 1915 to combat the indifference towards recruitment efforts in Devon.

Recruitment

At the beginning of 1915, the authorities responsible for recruiting in Devon reflected upon the varied success of volunteering efforts across the county since the outbreak of war. When compared to other regions of Great Britain, recruitment efforts in Devon

since August 1914 failed to live up to the high patriotic expectations of the ‘provincial patriots’. This was illustrated by the dismal attempt to raise a Pals’ Battalion in Exeter called ‘Exeter’s Own’. The correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* was certain that there was no excuse for this failure.²⁸ It was believed that in Exeter the men who had decided to shirk far-outnumbered those who had volunteered to serve in the armed forces. They would only enlist when they were compelled to serve because they preferred the ‘feather bed of the craven to the hero’s reward of the battlefield’.²⁹ The ‘provincial patriots’, local recruiting sergeants and other patriotic individuals hoped that 1915 would usher in a more successful year for recruitment efforts in Devon; yet, despite the fact that the recruiting figures for the county had increased since the beginning of the year, Fortescue said in February that he was not satisfied that the ‘results up to date had been quite commensurate with the work done’ by recruiting agents and the ‘provincial patriots’ across Devon.³⁰ This meant that the DPRC decided on 12 January 1915 that they would approach the ‘question of recruiting with great zeal’.³¹ Indeed, when Fortescue was asked about his stance towards the prospect of conscription on 27 February, his response revealed that if conscription ‘were ordered by the wisdom of Parliament, he would do his best to make compulsory service a success’.³² However, he was certain that unless compulsory service was ordered he would have to do ‘his best to make the voluntary system a success’.³³ Keith Grieves suggests that Sussex’s local elite had to change their recruiting techniques so that by April 1915 the ‘language and imagery of recruitment had shifted significantly from the controlling presumptions of August 1914’.³⁴ This was also true for Devon’s elite.

²⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 1 January 1915, p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Western Times*, 13 February 1915, p. 3.

³¹ *Western Times*, 12 January 1915, p. 3.

³² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 27 February 1915, p. 3.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Keith Grieves ed., *Sussex in the First World War* (Lewes: Sussex Record Office, 2004), p. 2.

Through new dedication and collaboration, the ‘provincial patriots’ could approach the question of recruitment with new strategies and more convincing appeals to enlist such as Recruitment marches.³⁵ A recruitment march or a route-march would involve units within the Devonshire Regiment travelling along a specific route with local recruiting sergeants and local ‘provincial patriots’, through the towns, villages and hamlets. It was intended that these marches would raise ‘public awareness and advertised well in advance to enable the population to come out and see the local battalion’.³⁶ Indeed, Helen Townsley argues that when route-marches in the city of Hull are analysed within the framework of Anssi Passi’s research on regional identity, they can be viewed ‘not only as an expression of “regional consciousness”, but also as a means through which the civic authorities perpetuated the “ideal” imagery of the community to the residents of the city’.³⁷ It was anticipated that the presence of local troops, along with the appeals from the local elite, would encourage this sense of a regional consciousness in Devon and help to win over the hearts and minds of Devon men who were reluctant to volunteer. To demonstrate their support for these campaigns, the county’s elite also subscribed private money to help finance the route-marches and the ‘military authorities readily co-operated’ to organise them.³⁸ According to Fortescue’s memoirs, under the energetic management of the clerk to the Lieutenancy, Mr H. Ford, the route-marches began in earnest across Devon.³⁹

The first route-march in Devon took place from the 12 January until the 15 January 1915. A small party of the 3rd Battalion of the Devon Regiment left from Exeter bound

³⁵ Devon Heritage Centre: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 32.

³⁶ Derek Rutherford Young, ‘Voluntary Recruitment in Scotland, 1914-1916’, University of Glasgow, PhD thesis, 2001, p. 170.

³⁷ Helen Townsley, ‘The First World War and Voluntary Recruitment: A forum for regional identity? An analysis of the nature, expression and significance of regional identity in Hull, 1900 -1916’, University of Sussex, PhD thesis, 2008, p. 234.

³⁸ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 32.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

for the town of South Molton. From South Molton, the Regiment and local recruiting authorities visited all the hamlets and other habitations en route to the village of Witheridge.⁴⁰ According to the correspondent for the *Western Times*, it was evident that everywhere on the route-march the ‘presence of the soldiers excited great interest, and they had an enthusiastic reception from the inhabitants, who gave them refreshments and wished them good luck’.⁴¹ Fortescue revealed that this route-march achieved a certain amount of success and that the soldiers received a very cordial reception amongst the local populations.⁴² In reality, Fortescue noted in his diary for the 15 January that the route-march had produced around 48 to 60 recruits.⁴³ It is important to emphasize that, like the first recruitment march in Devon, many of the route-marches that followed prompted the residents of specific localities to support the troops in a humanitarian way with generous hospitality. Instead of encouraging their men-folk to enlist, the villages of the county provided ‘endless food [to the troops], but few recruits presented themselves’ on these marches.⁴⁴ Yet, despite the intention of the recruitment marches to change and shape public understanding of the war across Devon, it became clear that the route-marches were more revealing about the depth of indifference present in some of the county’s men-folk towards enlistment.

At a meeting of the Honiton Division Parliamentary Recruiting Committee held in Exeter on 26 February 1915, Fortescue revealed to the representatives of the Committee that a route-march that passed through North-West Devon had exposed in some localities of the county a ‘certain amount of apathy and indifference to the seriousness of the position prevailed’.⁴⁵ Indeed, in an article on the progress of the recruiting

⁴⁰ *Western Times*, 12 January 1915, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Western Times*, 15 January 1915, p. 5.

⁴² DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 32.

⁴³ DHC: 262M/FD46, Lord Fortescue diary, 1914-1916, 5 January 1915.

⁴⁴ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 32.

⁴⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 March 1915, p. 3.

marches in North Devon, a correspondent for the *Western Morning News* was disgusted at the indifferent responses from some of the young men from the region towards the prospect of volunteering. One such response from a farmer's son confirms this sense of indifference towards the war with his declaration that he and his friends as 'farmers' sons-be going to stay home and look after the grub and the money'.⁴⁶ This prompted one seasoned Tommy to laughingly remark to the correspondent about his frustration to convince North Devon's men to even remotely consider volunteering: 'How I should like to come round here with orders to compel the beggars to come'.⁴⁷ This idea taps into the idea that the only way to which some of Devon's men would fight in the Army was through the introduction of a system of compulsion rather than with appeals to join. Another recruitment march which confirms the presence of this indifference towards the seriousness of volunteering and the war occurred in the West Devon village of Bridestowe on 20 February. Army representative Mr Millman urged the men of Bridestowe to join the army and the answer he received to his appeals was that "We've got no time for that rummage. Let someone else do it if they like".⁴⁸ The correspondent then includes Millman's "patriotic" reply to the people of village that he hoped 'such cowards will receive nothing but contempt from their more patriotic fellows'.⁴⁹

During the same recruiting march, the Devonshire Regiment passed through the West Devon village of Sourton, and the Vicar, the Reverend W. J. Whitwell, welcomed the party to the locality. According to Whitwell, the village was labelled a 'black sheep' parish in the local press because of the fact that 'only 8 out of the population of 350 are serving'.⁵⁰ The correspondent from the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* suggested that the absence of young men in the crowd to welcome the Devonshire Regiment spoke

⁴⁶ *Western Morning News*, 18 February 1915, p. 3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 20 February 1915, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

volumes about how they were evidently ashamed of the low recruitment numbers from the village.⁵¹ Similarly, Edrica de la Pole observed during a recruitment meeting on 22 April at the South Hams town of Modbury that the ‘eligible men [of the town] were conspicuous by their absence’.⁵² As a consequence of this absence, a local recruitment canvasser Mr J. Coyle revealed to de la Pole that they managed to secure 4 recruits ‘but that was all’.⁵³ A correspondent from the *Western Express and Torrington Chronicle* who accompanied another recruiting march in North Devon noted that the apathy in the county districts was, ‘in many cases, almost unbelievable’.⁵⁴ In a similar turn of events, the men of the West Devon village of Chelston were branded as cowards when a recruitment march passed through on 20 February 1915, because they too ‘remained out of sight until the danger was past’.⁵⁵ As a result of their nonattendance, the army representative Mr F. Howard addressed the crowd and criticised the apathy of these young men ‘in terms which should have made them squirm had they plucked up sufficient courage to be present’.⁵⁶

During a route-march in the North Devon village of Buckland Brewer on 18 February 1915, a young farmer told a *Western Morning News* correspondent that he would not join up but instead he would stay at home to work on the farm. Mr Millman, a representative from Tavistock Urban District Council, pointed to the soldiers and interrogated the agriculturalist: ‘He has been to the front and done his share. Won’t you join and help the others’.⁵⁷ The farmer cockily replied that he had never requested the man to go and uttered in a decisive tone of defiance in the interrogation that ‘I won’t

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² PWDRO: 1306-23, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1915, 22 April 1915, p. 112.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Western Express and Torrington Chronicle*, 20 February 1915, p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 20 February 1915, p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Western Morning News*, 18 February 1915, p. 3.

join; so there'.⁵⁸ After this, the correspondent noted that Millman proclaimed that the farmer “‘ought to be kicked!’”,⁵⁹ In a similar tone of impudence, another member of the crowd replied to Millman’s request that “‘When the Germans come, we’ll join the Army’”.⁶⁰ A correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* who witnessed responses such as these came to the conclusion that it was of ‘no use to explain to such laggards that by that time it would be too late; it was merely a waste of breath’.⁶¹ A similar response of frustration was expressed at a later recruitment march in Okehampton where Millman expressed to the crowd his frustration with the men he had encountered during the march: ‘I have the most utter and profound contempt for the man who can enlist and will not. God help England if she has to rely on such nerveless, brainless, and cowardly fellows as some we have met this week’’.⁶²

It is clear that other ‘provincial patriots’, like Millman, were frustrated that their appeals could not change the reluctance of some of Devon’s men towards the prospect of military service. During a route-march of the Devonshire Regiment on 20 February 1915 which passed through the North Devon village of Bradworthy, Army recruiter Colonel Griffen became so frustrated with the subdued response from the men of the village that he demanded of the men in the crowd: ‘Will none of you make any self sacrifice? You are content to die and have a decent funeral and you think that you will get into heaven’.⁶³ The path to heaven was, according to Griffen, through sacrifice and it was clear that men of Bradworthy were reluctant to participate in the most important sacrifice to the men-folk of Britain: the sacrifice of blood through military service. In disbelief, Griffen went to great pains to shame the men of the village in order to make

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 20 February 1915, p. 3.

⁶² *Western Times*, 20 February 1915, p. 4.

⁶³ *Western Express and Torrington Chronicle*, 20 February 1915, p. 4.

them re-evaluate their apathy: ‘Good God, men of Bradworthy, are you content to stop here and let others do your fighting?’⁶⁴ By considering such responses to the appeals to enlist, it was perceived in the local press that the appeals of the ‘provincial patriots’ and local army recruiters seemed, at times, to ‘fall on heedless ears’.⁶⁵

These responses from some of Devon’s men-folk are evidence of their defiance towards the appeals of the ‘provincial patriots’. The rhetorical framing of the debates surrounding recruitment reveal that there was a great divide between those who prioritised their own survival over that of the nation. This also aids to confirm the mentality of these men who thought that if the war was as serious as the ‘provincial patriots’ claimed then a system of compulsory service would need to be introduced. This was the case in Leicester where according to F. B. Armitage there were still 60,000 men of military age in Leicestershire and Rutland who had not volunteered by the summer of 1915. He argues that the reason for this was a widespread passivity ‘an understanding amongst men that they would go when they are called’.⁶⁶ Likewise, it was reported in the *West Briton* on 20 May 1915 that in Cornwall due to the ‘fact that [rural communities] are so far from the centre of things the people do not realise the tremendous issues at stake’.⁶⁷ The indifference exhibited by some of Devon’s men-folk in some North Devon villages did not go unnoticed by the region’s women. Previously in September 1914, de la Pole had tried, in vain, to convince the men of Kingston to enlist. One such man who she could not persuade to enlist was Ernest Freeman, the son of the landlord of a public house in Kingston. When she saw him in Kingston on 3 January 1915, his mother Mary Freeman revealed to her that instead of volunteering her

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 20 February 1915, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 89.

⁶⁷ *West Briton*, 20 May 1915 as cited in Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p.151

son was instead trying to join the police.⁶⁸ Mary Freeman also told de la Pole that once her son had informed her of de la Pole's attempts to convince him to enlist his mother 'expressed the wish to "see the lady".⁶⁹ It is clear that some Devonians resented the efforts of the 'provincial patriots' as intermediaries of the war effort as they signified their actions to be the meddling and interference of Devon's notables in their lives.

According to the correspondent of the *Western Morning News*, it became apparent to him during a route-march on 18 February 1915 that the 'young men of the villages of North Devon must have experienced some feelings of shame when they saw the contempt of the girls at their refusal'.⁷⁰ However, he was astounded by the generosity and patriotism of the region's women. In a side note, he puts forward an interesting suggestion that 'not the slightest difficulty would have been experienced in enrolling a whole regiment of the fair sex'.⁷¹ At another recruiting march which passed through the North Devon village of High Bickington on 16 February 1915, one woman in the crowd exclaimed 'why don't they get up a regiment for women'.⁷² A seasoned soldier looked on and commented that 'the women have far more pluck than the men'.⁷³ Indeed, when the same route-march passed through the village of Burrington it was observed that the most cordial welcome given to the Devonshire Regiment was from the women and the old men of the locality.⁷⁴ These instances suggest that Devon's women cannot be conceptualised as simply observers in the masculine system of recruitment, as their role in recruitment efforts were more complex. Bonnie White observes that these spectacles were attempts by women to 'shame men into enlisting by calling into question their

⁶⁸ PWDRO: 1306-23, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1915, 3 January 1915, p. 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Western Morning News*, 18 February 1915, p. 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Western Morning News*, 16 February 1915, p. 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

masculinity'.⁷⁵ These were deeply symbolic actions because the sight of women 'offering to enlist, or calling men cowards were explicit attacks on their patriotism'.⁷⁶

In Devon, the nature of patriotism in specific localities was understood through its recruitment figures, which were perceived to reflect the state of patriotism in a particular community. The 'provincial patriots' tried to combat the bad recruitment rates in districts and parishes of Devon such as Whitwell through the promotion of localities in the county who had good enlistment figures. According to Fortescue, some parishes in Devon had done as 'admirably as Exmouth and showed an enlightened appreciation of the national crisis'.⁷⁷ This use of the language of the enlightenment was intended to clarify to Devonians a distinct dichotomy between those who were enlightened as to the importance of recruitment efforts and individuals who were unenlightened and ignorant towards the significance of the war. Indeed, Exmouth was later celebrated in the pages of *The Observer* on 25 April 1915. The article suggested that the town possessed a patriotic record because over 1,100 men out of a male population of 4,700 had enlisted since the war began.⁷⁸ Similarly, it was reported on 18 June 1915 that 55 men from the East Devon villages of Colyton and Colyford had volunteered into the Army since the outbreak of war.⁷⁹ According to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 41 of these volunteers were recruited by local Police Constable Hurford who was the district's recruiting officer.⁸⁰ Therefore, not only were individual districts of Devon praised for their recruiting results but also the efforts of individual recruiters were extoled in the hope that fellow Devonians would follow their example. This campaign of commendation also applied to recruitment results for the Navy because the South Devon village of

⁷⁵ Bonnie J. White, 'Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 52, 3 (2009) p. 665.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Western Times*, 3 March 1915, p. 3.

⁷⁸ *The Observer*, 25 April 1915, p. 13.

⁷⁹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 18 June 1915, p. 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Shaldon boasted that out of a population of about a thousand there were ‘152 men in the Forces, including about fifty in the Navy’.⁸¹ Charles Sprague, one of the secretaries of the Tavistock Division of the DPPC, hoped that a good proportion of the male population of the district had volunteered for military service. This was evident when wrote to J. J. Newcombe, the town clerk. In his letter, Sprague reveals that he could not gain a clear idea about the recruitment rates for the West Devon town of Tavistock up to August 1914 but he was certain that ‘our loyal and ancient Borough should not be behind other places in recording the patriotism and devotion of its sons’.⁸² Fortescue appealed to Devon elites that they had to get a little more from the willing to ‘bring the backward places up to the level of those who had done better’.⁸³ Through this sense of competition in recruitment figures between districts, it was hoped that the combined results for voluntary recruitment across the county would improve.

Route-marches were an important wartime spectacle for specific localities as they were also ‘designed to be entertainment events, to attract an audience and hold its attention long enough to get the main message across’.⁸⁴ Indeed, the purpose of these marches was to educate Devon’s men-folk of their responsibilities as British citizens to defend Britain and the Empire in this time of great crisis. Adrian Gregory notes that there was a similarity to a religious revival in aspects of the recruiting meetings throughout 1914 and 1915:

platforms were set up from which a speaker appealed to the conscience of the listener, laying out in great detail the terrible consequences, literally “hellish”, of Germany victory. Men were then asked to “attest”; those who did so would be

⁸¹ *Western Times*, 3 September 1915, p. 5.

⁸² DHC: 3248A/13/76, Letter to J. J. Newcombe from Charles Sprague, 7 August 1915, item 3.

⁸³ *Western Times*, 19 March 1915, p. 7.

⁸⁴ Young, ‘Voluntary Recruitment in Scotland, 1914-1916’, p. 170

applauded by the crowd. Those who came forward would then encourage others to do so.⁸⁵

Similarly, Nicoletta F. Gullace also points out that to contemporary theorists the sight of men who chose to volunteer revealed that they had undergone a conversion, an ‘inner transformation, one that enlightened him to the duties of citizenship and grounded his defence of the nation in moral conviction rather than physical force’.⁸⁶ Like the open air recruiting meetings in specific localities during 1914, ‘provincial patriots’ invested significant meaning into the recruitment marches which took place in the county during 1915. Thus, local identities and county unity became important aspects of the sermons delivered by the ‘provincial patriots’ during the route-marches in Devon during 1915. Recruitment efforts across the British Isles were rooted in a strong identification with specific localities. Helen McCartney argues that to most Lancastrians, a ‘strong identification with their home town or city could also be accompanied by pride in their county’.⁸⁷ The same can be said about other localities because regional identities, county pride and local homogeneity were very powerful notions which were employed in the rhetoric of recruitment efforts on a local level.⁸⁸ Indeed, Catriona Pennell suggests that ‘by playing on regional identities of potential recruits, the moral foundations of the war were made more accessible’.⁸⁹ In Devon, this was evident in Dudley Clark’s poem *For Dartmoor* which was published in *Punch*. It should be noted that this poem was written in the linguistic style of the South Devonian accent, which was intended to ensure that its employment of local identity resonated with Dartmoor’s

⁸⁵ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p.75

⁸⁶ Nicoletta F. Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p. 102.

⁸⁷ Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 76.

⁸⁸ Keith Grieves, “‘Lowther’s Lambs’: Rural Paternalism and Voluntary Recruitment in the First World War”, *Rural History* Vol. 4, 1 (1993) pp. 55-75

⁸⁹ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 155.

men-folk to stress the validity of volunteering for this particular Devon locality: ‘An I must fight wi’ Devon men Vur Dartymoor, our dartymoor’.⁹⁰ The notion of a cohesive county identity was also framed by an application of local history in specific localities. In Lancashire, the representations of Lancashire’s history, in particular the role that the region played during the Wars of the Roses, were important features in the framework of recruitment efforts in Lancashire.⁹¹ Within England, local recruiting authorities also used what Nicholas Mansfield labels local ‘historical military exemplars’ which added to the authenticity of local appeals to enlist and protect their communities.⁹² For instance, both the figures of Admiral Horatio Nelson and Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell were used as patriotic examples in recruiting efforts in the counties of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire respectively.⁹³ This was also the case in Scotland as Scottish patriotism was promoted and ‘imbued deeply with an imagined warrior past’.⁹⁴

The promotion of regional historical figures and heroes in the rhetoric of recruitment efforts also helped to construct a narrative of heroic obligation to specific local populations. Alfred T. Gregory suggested that Devon’s historical heroes had passed onto their descendants the privileges and freedoms that they had fought for and to which ‘it was up to the present generation to see that freedom was preserved unimpaired’.⁹⁵ This style of narrative can also be seen in a pamphlet published by the DPRC on 1 February 1915 entitled *The War: An Appeal to Devon Men and Women*. In particular, the pamphlet focused on the famous Devonian Elizabethan privateer, Sir Francis Drake as both a local and national icon. Within the pamphlet, Drake was made both the

⁹⁰ Dudley Clark, ‘For Dartymoor’ in W. B. D. Henderson ed., *Poems from Punch, 1909-1920* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1922) p. 141.

⁹¹ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, p. 84.

⁹² Nicholas Mansfield, ‘English Farmworkers, the Marches and the impact of the Great War’ in Tebbutt ed., *Rural and Urban Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (2004) p. 102

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 85.

⁹⁵ Gregory, *Recollections of a Country Editor*, p. 65.

prominent figurehead and the progenitor of Devon's discourse of heroism. This meant that it was the duty of Devon's men to follow in Drake's courageous footsteps. A distinct sense of county pride in Devon became entwined with a historical sense of obligation, which was elevated beyond the county in order to encompass the role of past Devonians in the defence of Britain and the Empire:

In past time, England has often called to her men for help, and the men of Devon have never been deaf to her call. They sailed with Drake against the Armada; they went with Marlborough into Flanders, with Wellington to the Peninsula and Waterloo, with Roberts to Afghanistan, and with Buller to Africa. Wherever in the world their country has wanted them, [the] Men of Devon have ever been to the fore.⁹⁶

The employment of local heroes in recruitment efforts represented specific 'sites of memory' for local and national populations which were 'invested with meanings just as revelatory about the culture which constructs and represents them'.⁹⁷ An example of this was during a route-march in the North Devon village of Parkham on 20 February 1915. One resident of the village, Mr Howard appealed to the village's men-folk to enlist. In his defence, Howard urged them to join up in the name of Drake because they should not 'let "Drake's Drum" beat in vain'.⁹⁸ This is in reference to a legend in county folklore that should England be threatened with danger, the sound of Drake's beating drum would 'recall his spirit to defeat the enemy' and that it was audible to all the sea-folk of Devon.⁹⁹ This was similarly apparent in Percy Hazelden's poem *Devon Men* on 7 July 1915 which praised the professed innate courage of Devon's men and linked the

⁹⁶ DHC: 1037M/LG4/1/3, The War: An Appeal to Devon Men and Women, 1 February 1915, p. 1.

⁹⁷ Michael Finn, 'War news and the construction of "community" in Britain, 1914-1918', *Historical Research* Vol. 83, 221, (August 2010) p. 521.

⁹⁸ *Western Express and Torrington Chronicle*, 20 February 1915, p. 4.

⁹⁹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 February 1915, p. 3, *The Toronto World*, 2 May 1915, p. 12.

picturesque landscape of Devon, in particular Bideford and Appledore, with the spirit of Drake as a local and national hero.¹⁰⁰ In fact, it was claimed that either the ghost of Drake haunted Admiral John Jellicoe or that Drake's spirit was reincarnated in Jellicoe.¹⁰¹ It is important to recognise how this local cultural code was used to reinforce specific localities as being patriotic because they had higher recruitment rates. For instance, the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* stated that Drake's spirit had spoken to the men of the South Devon town of Exmouth. Indeed, the newspaper claimed that over a thousand Exmouthians may 'be counted among those who have finished their games and are beating the Germans too'.¹⁰² This statement references another legend of Devon folklore in which Drake boasted whilst playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe that they could defeat the Spanish Armada and win the game too.

At the same time, the narrative of heroic obligation could easily be used as a damning criticism to further underline the lacklustre response of some of Devon's men to the recruitment efforts. The vicar of the South Devon village of Alfington, Reverend Gerald M. L. Reade used Devon's heroic past to further illustrate the poor response of Devon's men-folk to calls to serve in 1915. In his poem *England's Call, the Empire's Response - Duty of Devonians*, Reade crafts a striking juxtaposition between the valiant Devonians of the past who were descendants of 'Drake, Grenville, Hawkins - countless heroes bold', and the disappointing generation of 1914 who were selfish and too 'poor in spirit for the brave man's part'.¹⁰³ A similar patriotic poem was B. Reed's *Wanted: Not Conscription – Volunteers* which offered a similar appeal to the gallant sons of Devon. It says that should enlist to support voluntary recruitment in the hope that this would

¹⁰⁰ Percy Hazelden, 'Devon Men' in W. B. D. Henderson ed., *Poems from Punch, 1909-1920* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1922) pp. 144-146.

¹⁰¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 15 April 1915, p. 3, *The Toronto World*, 2 May 1915, p. 12.

¹⁰² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 February 1915, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Gerald M. L. Reade, 'England's Call, the Empire's response - duty of Devonians', *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 September 1915, p. 9.

halt the introduction of conscription.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Reed argued that if Devon's sons' did enlist, it would never be said that 'Devonia lacked in Patriotic fame' rather it would be known that 'Devonshire Dumplings' could 'procure the "clotted cream"'.¹⁰⁵ The publication of local patriotic poems such as these in the local press were an integral part of the war culture of 1914 to 1918 as they intended to 'shape public opinion, to embarrass those who were hanging back and to work on the psyche of the undecided'.¹⁰⁶ However, these appeals to local patriotism and community affiliation did not always convince potential recruits or guarantee an increase in recruitment rates.¹⁰⁷

In the route-marches and other recruitment efforts during 1915, Devon elites invested significant meaning into locally raised regiments to make them the 'centre of county identity'.¹⁰⁸ According to McCartney, the white rose of Lancashire with its connotations of the duty and bravery, as shown in the Wars of the Roses, became linked to the deeds and accomplishments of the 55th Division in First World War.¹⁰⁹ However, the low recruitment numbers in Devon meant that the Devonshire Regiment, as a centre of county identity, did not entirely comprise of men from Devon. The 'provincial patriots' were in many cases bitterly disappointed that several divisions of the Devonshire Regiment had to be filled up with recruits from other counties, as was the case with the 9th Division of the Devonshire Regiment. On 3 June 1915, the editor of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* published an editorial as an attempt to encourage Devon's men to volunteer into the county's Regiment. If the Devonshire regiment was to retain its county character, it was "up to" Devonians to make a determined effort to fill as many

¹⁰⁴ B. Reed, 'Wanted: Not Conscription – Volunteers', *North Devon Journal*, 29 April 1915, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Young, 'Voluntary Recruitment in Scotland, 1914-1916', p. 171

¹⁰⁷ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 154

¹⁰⁸ Mansfield, 'English Farmworkers, the Marches and the impact of the Great War', p. 102

¹⁰⁹ McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, p. 84.

of the vacant places as possible'.¹¹⁰ There remained, according to the editor, a large number of single men in the legendary “‘Shire of the Sea Kings,’ who have failed to respond to the call of King and County'.¹¹¹ However, he did reveal that Devon was not the only county with this problem as what was true of Devon was ‘true of England generally’.¹¹² These sentiments were echoed in the *North Devon Journal* when army recruiter Lieutenant Larder admitted with deep regret that they had to go to other counties for men to fill the ranks of the Devonshire Regiment. This was, in Larder’s view, a dishonourable practice because the other counties in Britain should ‘keep their men for their own regiments’ and Devon’s men-folk should fulfil their obligation to fight in the county regiment.¹¹³ Likewise, the *Manchester Evening News* reported that the ‘majority of the men in the Plymouth Battalion of the Naval Division ...are volunteer recruits from Manchester who enlisted last September’.¹¹⁴ Thus, in a letter from Tom W. Ainge to J. Boraston of the National Unionist Association, Ainge reveals that in spite of the best efforts, recruitment was still lagging in the naval port. The military authorities were, according to Ainge, not at ‘all satisfied with what Plymouth is doing’.¹¹⁵

It is clear that the framing of the debates surrounding military service in Devon around rural and county iconography, did not always resonate with the county’s population. The narrative of heroic obligation in recruitment efforts did not convince some Devonians of the importance of military service. The disappointment that the county’s men-folk did not live up to the legacy of Devon’s heroes was apparent in a recruitment march that passed through the West Devon village of Bridestowe. According to a

¹¹⁰ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 16 February 1915, p. 4.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *North Devon Journal*, 3 June 1915, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 1915, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ DHC: 1262M/L153, Letter from Tom W. Ainge to J. Boraston of the National Unionist Association, 11 May 1915, p. 1.

columnist for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, the indifferent responses from some of the young men who remained in Bridestowe had made him question whether these men had ‘never realised the duties which citizenship of the British Empire carries with it’.¹¹⁶ This was also the case in Torquay. As a result of very poor response to recruitment efforts on 3 September 1915 another correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* wrote that readers should remember that Torquay had just over 2,000 men who had enlisted since August 1914 and they were ‘helping to sustain the integrity of the Empire’.¹¹⁷ Yet, to the men who remained in Torquay, he offered a damning condemnation that they were ‘quite willing to let their comrades bear the whole of the town’s responsibility in the great struggle’.¹¹⁸ During the same month, Brauntonian notable John Yeo Tucker also capitalised on this narrative in his talk entitled ‘The War and the Shirkers’. He emphasized that the many eligible men left in the North Devon village of Braunton had a ‘bounden duty to do their portion for their motherland, and “not hide away in bye-lanes”’.¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, it became evident that the route-marches in Devon did not change some Devonian men’s attitudes to military service. According to an article from the *Western Times* on 2 March 1915, despite the route-marches in the county, recruitment efforts in Devon continued to be characterised as a ‘mixture of ignorance, apathy and enlightened patriotism’.¹²⁰ According to Fortescue there were parishes in Devon which seemed to be ‘divided from the first-named by some mysterious indefinable line of demarcation, showed only ignorance, apathy and utter want of appreciation of their

¹¹⁶ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 20 February 1915, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 September 1915, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Bob Brock and Ann Brock, *What Our Boys are doing at the front and what we are doing for them: the life of Braunton and Brauntonians during the First World War taken from the North Devon Journal* (Braunton: Braunton Museum, 2003) p. 15.

¹²⁰ *Western Times*, 2 March 1915, p. 3.

responsibilities to their county'.¹²¹ Similarly, Peter Simkins reveals that the 3rd East Yorkshire Regiment experienced similar hardships in persuading men to volunteer during a fourteen day recruitment march in late May 1915.¹²² Second Lieutenant T. R. H. Smyth wrote in the Regiment's journal that their arrival to the East Yorkshire village of the Holme-on-Spalding-Moor was not well received: 'We had fifty posters printed advertising this and we put most of them on old farmers' gates and windows and doors, so as to attract attention. These may have caused annoyance, because many [of them] were pulled down'.¹²³ After a recruiting meeting at the village's primary school, out of the seven men who presented themselves five of them were ineligible.¹²⁴ Ultimately, the route-march only managed to gain eight eligible recruits.¹²⁵ This, along with the examples of the route-marches in Devon, begs the question as to whether the marches were an effective means to increase recruitment numbers in the county.

Yet, sometimes the full impact of the route-marches in Devon took time to become fully apparent. For instance, Fortescue revealed in one unnamed parish that three men had joined the Army four days after the route-march.¹²⁶ Incidents such as these demonstrate that the 'seeds sown [at route-marches] sometimes bore unexpected results'.¹²⁷ This reaffirms the idea that the efforts of the 'provincial patriots', local recruiting sergeants and the Devonshire Regiment during these recruitment marches had 'not fallen on barren ground', as some recruits decided to enlist after the march rather than during the event itself.¹²⁸ Therefore, the continuous participation of Devon's elite was vital if these events were to be successful. On 19 March, Fortescue continued to appeal to Devonians

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The raising of the new armies, 1914-1916* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2007) p. 301.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Western Times*, 2 March 1915, p. 3.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

present at the meeting to ‘do their best to enlist the sympathy of local speakers and well-wishers, so that the route march could be a success’.¹²⁹ This was also the case when Fortescue offered an invitation to all the county’s populace ‘to do their best to put the work connected with recruiting in Devon on a sound and strong footing, and all parties could very well unite in the matter’.¹³⁰ However, the participation of all Devon’s elite in these route-marches was not guaranteed.

On 2 March, the parish council for the East Devon village of Beer refused to appoint a recruiting committee. According to Fortescue, the grounds for their refusal was that they believed that the ‘time had come to introduce Conscription; that they did not believe in civilians pressing men joining the Army; that the pay and allowances were insufficient; and that there was no need for a Committee, Beer having done as much as, or more, than it could be expected to’.¹³¹ Mr Bray added that ‘certain officials in Beer had sons of military age not serving, and when the leaders refused the others backed out’.¹³² It was clear that there were distinct limits to self-mobilization of Devon’s men. This was further apparent when a route-march which produced a similar disappointing result was later noted by Fortescue in his diary on 3 June 1915. As the Devonshire Regiment passed through the North Devon villages of Chittlehampton, Swimbridge and Landkey, the route-march had produced ‘lots of food, but no men’.¹³³ During the week of 14 June 1915 in East Devon, a route-march was well organised by the local elite. However, the speeches of both the local Labour and Liberal representatives for the District, according to the *Devon and Exeter* correspondent, failed to appeal amongst all of the crowd: ‘Their speeches did carry conviction with the thinking men and with the

¹²⁹ *Western Times*, 19 March 1915, p. 7.

¹³⁰ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 23 October 1915, p. 4.

¹³¹ *Western Times*, 2 March 1915, p. 3

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ DHC: 262M/FD46, Lord Fortescue diary, 1914-1916, 3 June 1915.

ladies, but the slackers remained unconvinced'.¹³⁴ This led the correspondent to conclude that despite the efficient organisation of the 'provincial patriots' the route-march was a 'fiasco'.¹³⁵

At the same time, the success of a route-march was also dependent on the success of the requests made by individual 'provincial patriots'. One success of this was during a route-march in the North Devon town of Barnstaple on 10 June 1915. In a conversation with a woman with three children, army representative Mr F. Howard pointed out to her that if her husband enlisted into the Army she would get 30 shillings a week for as long as the war lasted.¹³⁶ After hearing this information, her attitude towards the prospect of her husband joining the forces instantly changed. According to the correspondent of the *North Devon Journal*, her face 'immediately lit up with the prospect presented, and, as though afraid that the War would be brought to too speedy a conclusion, she eagerly asked "Do you think it is likely to last long?"'.¹³⁷ Therefore, it was only when the mother was informed she would receive this separation allowance, that her objection towards the prospect of her husband joining the Army disappeared. In a comparable situation, two local girls had previously decided on 16 January 1915 in the North Devon village of Kings Nympton, to take a more active role in recruitment in the locality and played the role of recruiting sergeants. Consequently, their efforts were received with conspicuous success because they had induced five brothers to volunteer.¹³⁸ Appeals from Devon's elite were not as effective. On 7 August, Charles Sprague revealed how bewildered he was in his attempts to persuade the men of Tavistock to enlist. He reported to Fortescue that he had 'spent considerable time trying to understand how to

¹³⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 19 June 1915, p. 4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *North Devon Journal*, 10 June 1915, p. 5.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Western Morning News*, 16 January 1915, p. 8.

reach the people of Tavistock'.¹³⁹ Since the war, he had not achieved much success in his appeals because ‘apparently no authoritative body can compel these men to come forward’.¹⁴⁰ When a route-march arrived at the South Devon hamlet of Torre during the week of 3 September 1915, the correspondent of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* noticed that the young men in the crowd ‘waxed sarcastic over the thrilling appeals of the speakers, [whilst] others were mildly enthusiastic, but the sentiment was the same in the end; they were all determined to remain slackers’.¹⁴¹

During a recruitment march in the mid-Devon village of Kenton on 9 September 1915, Sergeant Rendle VC admitted to the crowd that “‘We are not a Press Gang … although we have a press gang with us, so we do not force you, but appeal to you to come forward’”.¹⁴² It is important to ask whether Devonians did perceive the military units present on these route-marches as similar to a press gang. Arguably, to use the idea of a press gang reinforces the idea of conscription. In addition, Army recruiter Sergeant Seaman revealed to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* correspondent that during a recent recruiting meeting he had appealed to a couple of young men to volunteer and they said that they would think the matter over. However, according to Seaman, these two individuals had given him the same answer 13 months before. He emphasized their sense of indecision with his declaration that ‘by the time they had settled the matter their heads would be so swollen that he doubted if the Army would have a cap to fit them’.¹⁴³ In the local press, there were also reports of Devonians who heckled, criticised

¹³⁹ DHC: 3248A/13/76, Devonshire Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, Report from Charles Sprague, 7 August 1915 as cited in White, ‘Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915’, p. 656.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 September 1915, p. 2.

¹⁴² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 September 1915, p. 13.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

and accosted the ‘provincial patriots’ and recruiting Sergeants in 1915.¹⁴⁴ One such community of men labelled as slackers and whom Fortescue believed were to blame for Devon’s low recruitment figures, were Devon’s farmers.

As mentioned previously, stories flooded the local press that represented Devon’s farmers’ and their sons as shirkers from military service. Moreover, patriotic poems that were published in the local press helped to shape and cement the representation that the county’s farmers as unpatriotic slackers and shirkers who made excuses in order to escape recruitment into military service.¹⁴⁵ In his poem entitled *England’s Call, the Empire’s Response - Duty of Devonians*, Gerald L. M. Reade crafted a damning condemnation of Devon’s farmers and male shop keepers whom he believed were responsible for the county’s recruiting woes.¹⁴⁶ Consequently, these allegations helped to reinforce the image of Devon’s farmers’ as profiteers and shirkers who, in this new wartime morality, were moral pariahs and ‘outside human sympathy’.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, representatives of Devon’s farmers claimed, in their defence, that all of them ‘desired to be patriotic but for every man on the farm to drop tools and take up arms against the Germans was not the only way in which to show their patriotism’.¹⁴⁸ In light of the disappointing response from some recruitment efforts in Devon, the ‘provincial patriots’ were adamant that military duty was the only discourse of patriotism in the county. This meant that they considered that the defence of farmers that food production was an important duty in wartime as in fact being unpatriotic. Indeed, Devon’s elite believed that the attempts made by farmers’ to protect their sons’ from military service by using

¹⁴⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 1 January 1915, p. 2, White, ‘Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915’, pp. 641-666.

¹⁴⁵ Gerald M. L. Reade, ‘England’s Call, the Empire’s response - duty of Devonians’, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 September 1915, p. 9, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 30 March 1915, p. 6, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 1 May 1915, p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ Reade, ‘England’s Call, the Empire’s response - duty of Devonians’, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 September 1915, p. 9.

¹⁴⁷ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 142.

¹⁴⁸ *Western Morning News*, 4 January 1915, p. 5.

the necessity of domestic food production was merely an excuse. The frustration of the ‘provincial patriots’ with Devon’s farmers was heightened within the reports in the pages of the local press who repeatedly exposed the extent of the indifference towards military service amongst the county’s agriculturalists. An example of this was at a recruiting march on 16 February 1915 in the North Devon village of Burrington. The correspondent of the *Western Morning News* noted that the local ‘farmers and young men adopted a critical, and in some cases a superior attitude’ towards the sight of the Devonshire regiment in Burrington.¹⁴⁹ This suggests that farmers and young men were seen as arrogant in the manner in which they perceived that food production was more important than military service. This attitude helped to inform their apathy towards military service. A correspondent from the *Western Morning News* noted on 16 February 1915 that across Devon ‘there did seem to be undoubted apathy on the part of farmers’.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, army recruiters stated to the correspondents of the local press that many farmers deliberately held back their sons from recruiting.¹⁵¹ On 3 September 1915, Recruiting Authorities in South Devon complained, ‘in common with those in other parts of the county [the] farming community is not producing its fair share of recruits’.¹⁵² This was still the case in November 1915 when Fortescue had received word that members of Devon’s elite who had tried to convince ‘recruits in South Devon, especially among the farmers, have been met with the reply: “Why should we make any sacrifices whilst so-and-so is amusing himself as usual”’.¹⁵³ A correspondent for the *Western Express and Torrington Chronicle* stated that undoubtedly ‘much of the blame rests with the farmers sons who, if they choose, could set an excellent example to the labouring classes’.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ *Western Morning News*, 16 February 1915, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 September 1915, p. 2.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ DHC: 1262M/L114, Letter to Fortescue, 4 November 1915, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Western Express and Torrington Chronicle*, 20 February 1915, p. 4.

In light of this negative coverage in the local press, Devon's farmers argued that these articles in the local press had tarnished them with prejudice which was 'outside the bounds of common sense and justice'.¹⁵⁵ However, the indifferent responses from some farmers and their sons to the appeals to volunteer had helped create the perception that they had prioritised individual priorities over national ones. At a council meeting of the Devon Farmers Union (DFU) on 15 October 1915, Mr Willing argued that whilst farmers on the whole had accepted great sacrifices for the war, he had heard of a farm where a father and five or six sons were still at home. He believed that a parent who 'kept all these sons on a farm did not realise the seriousness of the situation'.¹⁵⁶ This was also the case in Cornwall. In a letter from Gleill Gretton to Fortescue dated 15 July 1915, Gretton included a report on Recruiting in Cornwall by Major Pike from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. This report revealed that during the route-marches in Cornwall there had been 'a marked absence of Farmers' Sons'.¹⁵⁷ Pike revealed that, as a class, Cornish farmers' sons had shown little interest in volunteering because they were rarely present during route-marches 'or come into the evening meetings'.¹⁵⁸ This became a topic of frequent commentary and discussion amongst recruiting officials in Cornwall. Moreover, the absence of farmers' sons at recruiting events in Cornwall had influenced other classes in the county and it had provided them with an excuse not to volunteer.¹⁵⁹ Despite these dire circumstances, Pike believed that the creation of a Pals' Battalion which comprised of Cornwall's farmers and their sons would overcome this recruiting dilemma. It was proposed that a farmer's Pals' Battalion should be created as a way to convince farmers and their sons to enlist. If recruiting officers and Devon's elite who were connected with the Recruiting movement 'wrote to the Representatives

¹⁵⁵ *Western Morning News*, 4 January 1915, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 15 October 1915, p. 10.

¹⁵⁷ DHC: 1262M/L114, Report on Recruiting Work in Cornwall, 7 July 1915, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ DHC: 1262M/L114, Letter from Witcain Campbell to Lord Fortescue, 12 July 1915, p. 1.

of the Farmers Unions in the various Districts and offered to meet Farmers in a conference and discuss the whole position and so perhaps organise the means by which the sons of Farmers might be able to enlist without prejudice to the Agricultural interests'.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, this would ensure that agriculture as an industry could send its quota to the army.¹⁶¹

By 1915, there were still 5,598 farmers' sons working on Devon's farms.¹⁶² This would be enough to raise a similar Pals' Battalion comprising Devon's agriculturalists. Based upon this, Fortescue submitted a proposal to create a military unit. The general response to Fortescue's proposal was positive. In a letter dated 12 July 1915, from Witcain Campbell of the Southern Command's Headquarters to Fortescue, Campbell revealed that the War Office (WO) recommended that they should postpone the formation of such a Pals' battalion until after the harvest was gathered in. This reveals that there was an understanding of the situation by the WO for agriculturalists, as they hoped recruitment efforts would be more successful after the harvest. After this event, Campbell believed that Devon and Cornwall seemed to 'offer the best prospect of success'.¹⁶³ In a second letter on 21 July 1915, from Gleill Gretton to Fortescue, Gretton attached a letter from Major Champion, the Recruiting Officer for Gloucestershire. Champion's letter was optimistic about the prospect of a Farmers' Battalion in Devon. However, the plan to create this unit was entirely dependent on the condition that the Army could establish and maintain good relations with the NFU. Champion was sure that if this could be achieved, the scheme for raising a Farmers' Battalion was 'well worth proceeding with'.¹⁶⁴ Yet, notwithstanding all of the positive correspondence that Fortescue received about this subject, his proposal was abandoned. In a telegram dated

¹⁶⁰ DHC: 1262M/L114, Report on Recruiting Work in Cornwall, 7 July 1915, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² DHC: 1262M/L114, Letter from Witcain Campbell to Lord Fortescue, 12 July 1915, p. 1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ DHC: 1262M/L114, Letter from Gleill Gretton to Right Hon. Lord Fortescue, 15 July 1915, p. 2.

4 September 1915 from General Campbell to Fortescue, he stated that after much consideration he had ‘decided to drop the raising of a Farmers Battalion for the present’.¹⁶⁵ Yet, Campbell does not specify why he dropped his support for the Farmers Battalion. Similarly, Launceston Town Council decided to cancel the raising of a local Farmers’ Battalion on 20 August 1915. Despite gaining the support of Launceston Division Parliamentary Recruiting Committee for the proposal, Colonel Harvey, a local recruiting officer, wrote that it was ‘decided not to form a Farmers’ Battalion’.¹⁶⁶

In his memoirs, Fortescue reveals that he in fact had limited confidence in the initiative as it was not a ‘very hopeful undertaking as the margin of farmer’s sons available for an Infantry Battalion with its second line was not large after providing for the Yeomanry and its second line’.¹⁶⁷ He also recalled that the WO refused the conditions of his proposal which was, in his view, just as well because ‘all the good men available of farmer class were wanted as officers in the next three years’.¹⁶⁸ Despite the fact that the Farmers’ Battalion did not amount to anything it was still an important project for the ‘provincial patriots’ and recruitment efforts in 1915, as it reveals the efforts made by Fortescue to try to reverse the perception of Devon’s farmers as shirkers by encouraging them to join their own Pals’ Battalion.¹⁶⁹ In Shropshire, an effort was made to ‘create special farmers’ unit, in response to public criticism of farmers’ lack of patriotism’.¹⁷⁰ Mansfield reveals that like Devon’s proposed Farmers Pals’ Battalion, this project in Shropshire was a dismal failure.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ DHC: 1262M/L114, Telegram from General Campbell to Lord Fortescue, 4 September 1915, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Western Times*, 20 August 1915, p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 32.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Mansfield, ‘English Farmworkers, the Marches and the impact of the Great War’, p. 102.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

On 23 October, Fortescue revealed that for the first six months of 1915, the number of recruits from Devon ‘averaged 500 a month for the Regular Forces, and a similar number of the Territorials’.¹⁷² Indeed, White stresses that by June 1915 recruitment numbers in Devon had rebounded.¹⁷³ Based on the rising recruitment statistics in Devon, one local notable Hugh Buller proclaimed to Fortescue in June that ‘Recruitment in the county is finally showing signs of life’.¹⁷⁴ However, Fortescue revealed that this was a fleeting improvement because since the beginning of July the numbers for Devon had shown a ‘grave falling off, only 400 men had been obtained for the Regulars and 300 for the Territorials’.¹⁷⁵ A reason to explain this development was, in Fortescue’s view, the priority timing of the harvest which meant that potential recruits were busy on farms reaping the harvest. At the same time, it was reported on 6 November 1915 that since the outbreak of war some 2,500 men from Devon had joined the Navy.¹⁷⁶ During a special recruiting meeting on 6 July 1915, recruiters for the Navy and the Royal Marines expressed their hope that good results would be gained. Nevertheless, in light of these frustrations and limitations within the voluntary system, it was understandable why contemporaries in Devon discussed the prospect of a compulsory scheme of recruitment. During a council meeting of the DFU on 15 October 1915, Mr Puddicombe expressed that he was ‘sick to death of canvassing’ and he would welcome conscription because it was ‘something systematic and definite’.¹⁷⁷ Despite the recruitment marches and the fact Puddicombe had been ‘run off his legs during the last six months in canvassing for recruits’, there were a ‘great many people [who] did not

¹⁷² *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 23 October 1915, p. 4.

¹⁷³ White, ‘Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915’, p. 661.

¹⁷⁴ DHC: 1262M/L153, Devon PRC, Mr Hughes-Buller to Lord Fortescue, June 1915 as cited in White, ‘Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 – December 1915’, p. 662.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 6 November 1915, p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 15 October 1915, p. 10.

realise that the war was a question of life and death'.¹⁷⁸ The implication of the evidence from the residents of Devon for totalization is that despite the efforts of the county's elites to educate Devonians as to the seriousness of the war, it would only be through the direct intervention of state driven totalization that a 'total' and co-ordinated system of manpower would be established.

Charities

The success of charitable efforts was an important indicator of the support and popularity that was invested by both the rural and urban populations of Devon into the war-effort. Moreover, the success of charities in Devon reflects this form of economic and social self-mobilization in the county. An example of a charity that attempted to capitalize on the strength of local patriotism in Devon was the DPF. In a memorandum from the DPF on Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospitals, Fortescue revealed that the cost of equipping the five principal and seventeen minor hospitals in Devon had been met by a variety of sources:

The War Office has contributed £2,500 of which sum nearly the whole has been spent on the Exeter Hospitals, where in addition considerable private donations have been expended on equipment. A Hospital provided at Tiverton under War Office Orders, but not utilised, was equipped partly from private funds and partly from County Red Cross funds [...] The cost of the equipment in the case of Torquay is being found as to £211 from Red Cross funds, as to £100 from the Devon Patriotic Fund, and the remainder by local subscription.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ DHC: 1037M/LG4/5/9, Devonshire Patriotic Fund printed memorandum No7 on the V. A. D. Hospitals, 30 April 1915, p. 1.

In an accompanying letter to the memorandum for the VAD hospitals on 30 April 1915, Fortescue reveals that since the beginning of the war the DPF had enjoyed great success:

The generosity of the public continues, and subscriptions are still coming in, and though they do not keep pace with the expenditure, there is still reason to hope that there will be a balance - perhaps a considerable one - unexpected on the termination of hostilities. It is idle to suggest any scheme for the disposal of this yet. All that can usefully be said is that we are confident that at no time will there be more need of funds than at the end of the War for supplementing Pensions and Grants to those for whom the provision made by the Government is in their circumstances inadequate.¹⁸⁰

The expenditure from the charity was spent on a number of different initiatives which included grants to dependents, allowances for materials for local working parties and grants to Red Cross and VAD Hospitals.¹⁸¹ At the same time, the DPF's expenditure had to also take into account other expenses which included the allowances for printing, stationary, advertising and other administrative expenses incurred by local committees.¹⁸² It is interesting to note in the DPF's accounts from 8 August 1914 to 31 March 1915 that £14,925 4s. 10d. of the charities funds were invested into Treasury Bills and in an account in the Union of London and Smiths Bank.¹⁸³ This means that DPF took advantage of saving their donations and gaining the tax-free interest on their collected aid, hence increasing its value. Ultimately, it is clear that the DPF succeeded as a popular charitable cause and as a business venture.

¹⁸⁰ DHC: 1037M/LG4/5/11, Typescript letter from Lord Fortescue, 30 April 1915, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ DHC: 1037M/LG4/5/10, Devonshire Patriotic Fund abstract of accounts from 8th August 1914 to 31st March 1915, March 1915, p. 1.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

Rebecca Gill argues that the engagement of the British people with the new humanitarian ethos is crucial in understanding the success of charities during the First World War. In fact, the new humanitarian politics with the notion of ‘moral’ citizenship ‘based upon voluntary action was now elevated to the level of national politics and equated with patriotic service’.¹⁸⁴ Charitable work was a ‘form of symbolic enlistment for thousands of citizens too old or of the wrong sex to fight’.¹⁸⁵ This concept can also be applied to individuals who were too young to fight because children and schools ‘made significant contributions to relief efforts’.¹⁸⁶ Pennell suggests that relief work during the war could allow the British people to express their loyalty to the nation for a variety of reasons.¹⁸⁷ The appeal of charities transcended across the social hierarchy of Edwardian society as non-combatants ‘felt a sense of duty and understood the necessity of the situation, even if they were averse to war in general’.¹⁸⁸ Stefan Goebel argues that in schools, war charities were ‘part and parcel of “war work”’.¹⁸⁹ This war-work was a deeply symbolic assertion of ‘civic worth [which] represented the civilians’ claim to membership in the wartime community’.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, people across the United Kingdom ‘volunteered for relief work in an effort to make their response to the war equal to the soldiers’ sacrifice’.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁴ Rebecca Gill, ‘Calculating Compassion in War: The “New Humanitarian” Ethos in Britain, 1870-1918’, University of Manchester, PhD Thesis, 2005, p. 171.

¹⁸⁵ Peter Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War* (London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1982), p. 503.

¹⁸⁶ Stefan Goebel, Dina Copelman, Eberhard Demm and Elise Julien, ‘Schools’ in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 214.

¹⁸⁷ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 76.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Goebel, Copelman, Demm and Julien, ‘Schools’, p. 214.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p. 76.

According to Paul Ward, ‘prominent patriotism’ was an evident component in women’s charitable efforts during the war.¹⁹² An example of this from Devon’s civic society was on 2 January 1915, when the *Exeter Flying Post* published a report which promoted the ‘splendid record of the useful work … by the Mayoress of Exeter’s war clothing depot’.¹⁹³ For women, charitable efforts provided a distinct recognition and validation of citizenship in the wartime community emerging from their patriotism. By engaging with these opportunities and publicising their responses, the Mayoress of Exeter and other women in Devon were presenting their dedication to the war effort. These fundraising and other charitable activities provided a ‘public mark of recognition and encouraged others to affirm their knowledge of women’s special service to the nation’.¹⁹⁴ Margaret H. Darrow reveals that charity work for French women became an integral part of the broader mobilization of femininity.¹⁹⁵ The co-ordination of the women’s relief efforts was also apparent in Germany.¹⁹⁶ Like the activities of the Mayoress of Exeter’s war clothing depot, certain activities to the soldiers ‘seemed to be only a modest extension of the care women provided to sons and husbands within the household’.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, charity was perceived to be the duty of women not only by the gender division of labour, but also because ‘women were deemed uniquely suited to its tasks’.¹⁹⁸ Consequently, it was the social morality attached to philanthropy that enabled individuals in Devon, whatever their background or social standing, to participate in charitable efforts.

¹⁹² Paul Ward, “‘Women of Britain Say Go!’: Women’s patriotism in the First World War”, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 12, 1 (2001) p. 38.

¹⁹³ *Exeter Flying Post*, 2 January 1915, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Ward, “‘Women of Britain Say Go!'”, p. 38.

¹⁹⁵ Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000) pp. 53-97.

¹⁹⁶ Jean H. Quataert, ‘Women Wartime Services Under the Cross: Patriotic Communities in German, 1912-1918’ in R. Chickering and S. Förster eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat, Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 453-483.

¹⁹⁷ Darrow, *French Women and the First World War*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Philanthropy rested upon the ‘belief in a firm, finely differentiated social and moral universe, in which social and moral hierarchies roughly coincided’.¹⁹⁹ The mobilization of civil society i.e. the local clergy, notables, aristocrats and the ‘provincial patriots’, was crucial in the success of wartime philanthropy. This led to the creation of individual public and private charities to assist in several wartime causes including the Belgian refugees. Pierre Purseigle argues that the reception of Belgian refugees emphasized the ‘mechanisms of wartime collective action’.²⁰⁰ This was revealed in the success of public appeals which were disseminated and also created by the local newspapers of the county. In a letter dated 21 April 1915 from A. Edmund Spencer, the Managing director of the *Western Morning News*, to Clara Andrew of the Devon County War Refugees’ Committee (DCWRC): Spencer stated that he was pleased to inform Andrew that the Directors of the newspaper had decided to make a grant to the DCWRC of ‘£250 for which sum I have pleasure in forwarding a cheque from the “Western Morning News” Belgian Relief Fund’.²⁰¹ The Directors were also interested to know whether their committee had ‘given special charge of cases in receipt of relief in Cornwall, as, if such should happen I feel sure that they would be likely to increase the grant now made’.²⁰²

The successes of the ‘provincial patriots’ in war charities were publicised to demonstrate their patriotism and to extend their spheres of influence in the wartime community. However, it is clear that tensions arose between war charities and pre-existing charities. In 1915, the demands of the war took a greater precedence over the country’s resources and increased its consumption of the nation’s finances. As a consequence of this national development, the Diocese of Exeter had received a budget

¹⁹⁹ Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War*, p. 503.

²⁰⁰ Pierre Purseigle, “‘A Wave on to Our Shores’: The Exile and Resettlement of Refugees from the Western Front, 1914-1918”, *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 16, 4 (2007) p. 439.

²⁰¹ DHC: 1262M/L117, Bundle correspondence concerning war refugees, Letter from A. Edmund Spencer to Miss Andrew, 21 April 1915, item 29.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

from the Treasury of £10,000 to fund all their necessary activities. This reduction of £3,000 when compared to the budget of 1914 meant that cuts for the Diocese's charitable activities were suggested. This included the Diocesan Clergy Fund (DCF), the Church Building Fund, religious education, general purposes, administration and margin.²⁰³ It was against this uncertainty that these organisations faced the arrival of specialised charities whose primary focus was to assist the war effort thereby capitalising on the public's patriotism. Consequently, these war charities had an undeniable effect upon the Church's activities. This is revealed in the report for the Diocese's 1915 Conference in which the DCF had suffered along with other Church funds during 1914 because of the 'competition of War Charities and the effects of higher taxation and the increased cost of living'.²⁰⁴ Indeed, it was predicted that these organisations would suffer especially during 1915.²⁰⁵

The aims of these Edwardian aid organisations within the Church of England were focused on peaceful objectives. Both peace-time and war charities were competing for compassion and the same financial resources, but a donation to the latter would have been perceived to be more fashionable under the conditions of war as it promoted dedication for the war effort. The Diocese's charitable activities and other pre-existing charities saw War Charities as competitors that 'took away erstwhile subscribers'.²⁰⁶ Hence, under these conditions, some peace-time charities had to work harder to appeal to individuals and organisations for precious financial donations and grants. Therefore, concerns over the declining membership of these long-standing charities, along with escalating operating costs, threatened and jeopardised the Diocese's pre-existing charitable efforts.

²⁰³ *Western Morning News*, 5 February 1915, p. 7.

²⁰⁴ DHC: 6610, Exeter Diocesan Conference Authorised Reports, 1905-1920, 3 November 1915, p. 18.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Frank Prochaska, *Christianity & Social Service in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p. 87.

Frank Prochaska suggests that the war sent out mixed signals to pre-existing charities because whilst the conflict offered them fresh opportunities to gain donations it also ‘tested their resolve and their finances’.²⁰⁷ Indeed, the DCF had experienced a loss of over £500 in 1914 when compared to the revenues from 1913. This reduction was also evident in the number of grants that the DCF had received: ‘The Committee’s grants from the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund were £225 for Endowment and £378 for Annual Grants to Benefices as compared with £150 and £405 in 1913’.²⁰⁸ However, it was also reported at the conference that the amounts received ‘earmarked for endowment greatly exceed[ed] those for annual grants, probably because of the strong appeal of the former to the local patriotism of parishioners, and because the result is permanent’.²⁰⁹ Consequently, if Church fund-raising activities were linked to a cause related to the war effort it was perceived that the chances of their financial survival through the war were increased. However, some Committee members felt that because of the increased cost of living under the war’s conditions, every effort needed to be ‘made to maintain their annual grants to benefices, which are of the utmost importance to many of the poorer incumbents’.²¹⁰

Yet, the fears of the DCF’s Committee proved unfounded because 1915 was a beneficial year for the Diocese. The Committee’s income from voluntary sources for 1915 ‘very considerably exceeded that for 1914, and was even larger than that for 1913. This was entirely due to the growing preference among subscribers for augmentation of endowment for which they gave £1,783 in 1915, as compared with £1,069 in 1914’.²¹¹ In fact, the £10,000 estimate for 1915 considerably exceeded the Diocese’s

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

²⁰⁸ DHC: 6610, Exeter Diocesan Conference Authorised Reports, 1905-1920, 3 November 1915, p. 18.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ DHC: 6610, Exeter Diocesan Conference Authorised Reports, 1905-1920, 8 November 1916, p. 14.

expectations. The Church had also decided that all benefactions from the DCF since July 1915 were to be used as ‘subscriptions to War Loans’.²¹² This reveals that despite the threat that war charities seemed to represent, local philanthropy continued to be well supported. This meant that Devonians had not ‘allowed [local charities and institutions] materially to suffer’ at the expense of supporting war charities.²¹³ Nevertheless, it would appear that discrete tensions existed amongst other charities in Devon including the Committee formed to assist the Belgian Refugees in the county.

On 15 March 1915, the DCWRC was formed with the intention to secure housing and offer hospitality to the Belgians and other war refugees.²¹⁴ However, an examination of the correspondence and the source material from the DCWRC reveals that the organisation of the DCWRC was a painstaking process.²¹⁵ Originally in 1914, Earl Fortescue and James Owen had formed a committee for the Belgian refugees stationed in Devon. However, it would appear that this spirit of co-operation and understanding was only temporary. In a letter to Fortescue dated 11 March 1915 from Clara Andrew, the Honorary Secretary of the Belgian Refugees’ and Relief Committees for Devonshire, she remarked that she had recently written a friendly letter to Mrs Owen, the Mayoress of Exeter. However, Clara felt that ‘with the lapse of time, she would not believe that I was trying to force myself into the former position against the work of the Mayor’.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, she insisted that she had met Mrs Owens and had received with a warm reception: ‘nothing could have been kinder’.²¹⁷ According to Andrew, even after the division of work, the Mayoress suggested that she would be ‘glad & proud to

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *North Devon Journal*, 30 December 1915, p. 2.

²¹⁴ TNA: CHAR 4/4, WAR CHARITIES ACT 1916: List of Registers, Cheshire (Maple)-Devon(Exeter), Devon and Cornwall War Refugees Committee, 1916, p. 745.

²¹⁵ DHC: 1262M/L117, Bundle correspondence concerning war refugees, 1914-1918.

²¹⁶ DHC: 1262M/L117, Bundle correspondence concerning war refugees, Letter from Clara Andrew of the Belgian Refugees’ and Relief Committees to Lord Fortescue, 11 March 1915, item 10.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

serve with her ... in all my capacity'.²¹⁸ It would appear that the public individuals in Devon realised the potential benefits, both in wartime and after the war, to claim the opportunities of publicity and patriotism that fundraising activities presented. This confirms Peter Cahalan's observation that charity's great strength during the First World War was that it was 'an expression of upper class tribalism'.²¹⁹ Consequently, these local civic figures such as Lord Fortescue, the Mayor and Mayoress of Exeter competed not only for financial donations for their respective charitable endeavours from the public but also for the publicity that their charitable work could achieve.

Conversely, Clara Andrew was sure that there seemed to be an outside influence at work to 'spoil things' with the DCWRC.²²⁰ This outside influence was Owen. She revealed that one of the joint treasurers of the organisation, Sidney Andrew was trying to get a 'friendly meeting with the Mayor today: & if we can get some sort of "rapprochement"'.²²¹ Internal disagreements proved to be a frequent thorny issue with the individuals who worked inside the organisation. In a letter dated 20 May 1915 from Owen to Fortescue, Owen informed Fortescue that regrettably his Committee's proposal to divide the funds that were assigned to help the Belgian Refugees was neither generous nor equitable. He pointed out that, as Fortescue had said, the 'only points of difference between us are as the intention of Exeter subscribers, and as to the expenses fairly chargeable to the City Account and those fairly chargeable to the County Account'.²²² Owen believed that the Exeter Committee had operated under a double purpose from its inception with the several thousand Belgian refugees in the County

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War*, p. 505.

²²⁰ DHC: 1262M/L117, Bundle correspondence concerning war refugees, Letter from Clara Andrew of the Belgian Refugees' and Relief Committees to Lord Fortescue, 11 March 1915, item 10.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² DHC: 1262M/L117, Bundle correspondence concerning war refugees, Letter from the Mayor of Exeter to Lord Fortescue, 20 May 1915, item 39.

area.²²³ It had also been charged with the ‘responsibility of placing as many refugees as it though desirable in permanent residence within the city boundary’.²²⁴

Nevertheless, it could not fairly be argued in Owen’s view that the ‘large number of refugees passing through Exeter were ever a city charge, or that they would have been accepted here if there had been any idea that they would be regarded as a city charge’.²²⁵ Owen believed that once separate committees were established, it would become ‘necessary for the purpose of dividing funds to go into the accountancy, in order to ascertain what proportion of the total expenditure should be debited to the County, and what to the City, we must carefully distinguish between the two liabilities’.²²⁶ In addition, Owen revealed that the animosity between himself and Fortescue was rooted in the issue of the DCWRC’s finances. This disagreement threatened to divide the DCWRC and produce further irritation in the process. Accordingly, Owen disagreed strongly with dividing the county Committee into separate organisations:

We say that all expenditure in regard to any receiving and despatching of refugees intended for places outside the city area, must be equitably charged to the county account, and that only those expenses in regard to, and on behalf of, refugees actually domiciled within the city can be charged to the city account.²²⁷

In a later letter dated 29 May 1915 to Lord Fortescue, Owen adamantly opposed Fortescue’s intervention. Owen believed that it was abominable that Fortescue had been ‘bothered so unnecessarily in this Belgian matter, and that you should be placed in a

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

false position by incorrect information given you from your side'.²²⁸ He repeated that the arrangement that they had proposed was 'equitable and generous, and I personally, am prepared to take my stand by it'.²²⁹ However, Owen admitted within this letter that 'if, and when you have spent £1,000, your Committee is still wanting funds to carry on, and we have any money at all, I shall use my best endeavours to get my Committee to give you a further sum: we want to help the Belgians generally'.²³⁰ He revealed that his Committee agreed him and resented the effort to drag Fortescue to 'jockey us into an unfair position by means of non-existent agreements and understandings'.²³¹ Although the Belgian refugees in Devon provided some public figures with an opportunity and means to promote their patriotic credentials, it is clear that this spirit of co-operation amongst Devon's elite towards the Belgians was undermined in 1915 by upper class tribalism.

It can be deduced that the success of some charities in Devon was based upon their pragmatic approach to support the war effort. This was evident in the collection of eggs which was regarded by a significant portion of Devon's population as an appropriate contribution and a practical way to engage with the war effort through the donation of produce. The intention of the organisation that collected these eggs from Devon's population, known as National Egg Collection for the Wounded (NECW), was to deliver 'newly laid eggs to wounded soldiers and sailors in base hospitals or collect funds to do so'.²³² In a letter dated 11 January 1915 from Mr A. Charles of the Cavendish Association to Lord Fortescue, Charles sought to further encourage the NECW's activities within Devon. By writing this short letter Charles affectingly wanted

²²⁸ DHC: 1262M/L117, Bundle correspondence concerning war refugees, Letter from the Mayor of Exeter to Lord Fortescue, 29 May 1915, item 36, p. 1.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

²³² Peter Cooksley, *The Home Front: Civilian Life in World War One* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006) p. 24.

Fortescue's public support, which he believed would help support his organisation's efforts:

The National Egg Collection for our wounded soldiers and sailors has my entire sympathy, and I trust that the people of Devonshire will respond to the urgent appeal made by the Committee for New Laid Eggs for all who are in a position to supply them; and for cash donations, with which eggs may be purchased from those who are not in a position to supply eggs to the collection.²³³

If Charles could gain Fortescue's endorsement, the NECW would have acquired the sponsorship of the Fortescue family. This letter confirms that as the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Fortescue's name and approval carried a great sense of respect and important popular currency amongst Devonian society. In response to Charles' appeal, Fortescue found that the donation of fresh eggs was a scheme which did not appeal to his sensibilities. He was sceptical whether these items were 'absolutely necessary' for the sick and the wounded. Fortescue argued that were not 'bread, milk and other provisions not to mention drugs, linen and scores of other things' more necessary.²³⁴ In essence, he believed that the basis of the entire proposal was essentially flawed in that unless the egg producers were 'asked to give them gratis I do not see why producers of eggs should be asked to give what is virtually a subscription over and above the taxation they bear, in order to relieve the general taxpayer of his plain duty'.²³⁵ This point about egg producers is a valuable one to consider because they needed to continue earning a living. To answer the NECW's call to donate eggs, these egg producers would be going beyond their current output. It would also lead them to suffer a severe disadvantage

²³³ DHC: 1262M/L130, Bundle of correspondence re Welfare, pensions, rehabilitation, Letter from Mr A Charles to Lord Fortescue, 11 January 1915, p. 1.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

when compared to the general taxpayer. Consequently, this would produce an unbalanced subscription system. Yet, despite these criticisms towards this patriotic proposal, Fortescue was willing to offer a compromise:

I would gladly however write a letter suggesting to the producers of eggs, who are for the most part cottagers, small holders and small farmers that they should give the first chance of purchase to any persons authorised to buy on behalf of the hospitals.²³⁶

Notwithstanding the validity of Fortescue's comments, it would seem that these remarks were out of touch when compared to the great popularity of this activity in Devon.²³⁷ For instance, during the first week of August 1915 it was reported that in Okehampton '540 eggs were collected' from the population of the town.²³⁸ On first impression, the donation of eggs may seem to be a trivial matter but to Devon's rural and urban communities the contribution of eggs for the war effort was a deeply symbolic gesture. It is important to note that the egg was also a symbol of hope in the Christian faith. It could also be interpreted that eggs acted as a donation which encapsulated an emotional form of mutual connection between loved ones in the military or to anonymous individuals.²³⁹ Similarly by writing messages, painting pictures, and pencilling their name and address onto these items, they became tokens of communication, as important as letters and postcards. This exchange between individuals of common experiences is vital in understanding the importance of charities and the concept of donation during the

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Ralph Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918: Being a short account of the part played by Tavistock and Neighbourhood in the Great War* (Tavistock: Jolliffe & Son, 1919) pp. 85-95, Stephanie Pouya, *The Book of Sampford Courtenay with Honeychurch: The History of a Rural Community* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2003) p. 133.

²³⁸ Wasley, *Devon and the Great War*, p. 66.

²³⁹ Rachel Duffett, 'A War Unimagined: Food and the rank and file soldier of the First World War' in J. Meyer ed., *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) pp. 61-68.

war. The act to donate an egg by its very simplicity resonated amongst the sensibilities of Devon's rural communities and helped to underline its popularity across the county.

The Organisation of the Rural Economy

The creation of county-based War Agricultural Committees during the summer of 1915 was a part of the 'totalizing logic' of the war. The British Government increased its intervention in agriculture because 'all the resources of the country had to be harnessed in the pursuit of victory'.²⁴⁰ The agricultural output of an essentially rural county like Devon was vital for the war effort. In turn, the formation of these supervisory organisations was a reflection of the importance of county-based agencies. Indeed, they worked with local County Councils in order to 'organise the supply of labour, examine food production in their localities and report on shortages of supply'.²⁴¹ It was intended that these county agencies, which comprised of prominent members of the local community, would increase co-ordination between local food production and the national food supply through the co-operation of farmers. However, despite the incentives to increase production, the most important point to farmers was the manpower required to collect the harvest. This was evident in the minutes of the Devon War Agricultural Committee (DWAC) during 1915 which focused more on the issue of labour to bring in the harvest rather than increased food production. Yet, as mentioned previously, Devon's farmers believed that to produce food for the nation was their wartime duty.

This aspect was also evident at a dinner held on 9 February 1915 for the Okehampton Branch of the NFU when the Liberal MP for Tavistock, John Spear said that he believed

²⁴⁰ John Stevenson, *British Society, 1914-45* (London: Penguin, 1986) p. 67.

²⁴¹ Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History, 1850-1925* (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 255.

that Devon's farmers would 'gladly pay their portion of the cost of the war and they were not indifferent to their responsibilities in contributing to the food supply'.²⁴² The rise in the price of food was a serious matter, and if 'farmers were not in a position to grow food stuffs, owing to their not having the men to harvest the produce, the present state of things would be aggravated'.²⁴³ It is clear that the assurances that were made by farmers at meetings of the NFU in Devon meant that farmers were not ignorant of their responsibilities towards the war effort. However, to some 'provincial patriots' the justification to grow food for the nation to keep their sons at home on the farm seemed to be more an excuse than a plausible reason. During a recruiting march in Torrington, one farmer whose two sons were serving in the armed forces was critical of the stance of his fellow agriculturalists: 'They won't let their sons go anywhere; they tie them down to the farm ... One or two of the boys have made a bolt for it, but in most cases the father puts his foot down'.²⁴⁴ The reason for the farmers' insistence on keeping their sons was that they were afraid that they would have to pay the remaining labourers a higher wage. Indeed, some saw them keeping their sons as their strategy to keep the business of the farm running as usual.²⁴⁵

The sea fishermen of Devon also experienced similar hardships in respect of manpower which had become exacerbated due to the loss of fishermen who had joined the Navy. At the meeting of the Devon Sea Fisheries Committee (DSFC) on 7 January 1915, one committee member proposed a solution to the problem. The committee member suggested that Belgian refugees who had been fishermen could be used as replacement labour on Devon's fishing boats. He reported to the DSFC that they had been formerly been used on some of their vessels and the results were satisfactory. However, they had

²⁴² *Western Morning News*, 9 February 1915, p. 3.

²⁴³ *Western Morning News*, 8 January 1915, p. 4.

²⁴⁴ *Western Morning News*, 17 February 1915, p. 7.

²⁴⁵ DHC: 1262M/L114, Letter to Fortescue, 4 November 1915, p. 1.

been stopped by the authorities who refused to grant permission for fishing boats to be ‘manned by other than British hands’.²⁴⁶ After consulting with the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (BAF) on the matter, Dr H. C. Martin, the DSFC’s representative for Exmouth, revealed that the BAF could not allow ‘aliens with our fishing fleet’.²⁴⁷ Mr Saunders agreed that whilst these precautions were necessary to prevent German spies from boarding their vessels, could the Government not ease their restrictions to aliens in respect of experienced Belgian fishermen. Saunders repeated the sense of urgency to this issue because every week more fishermen were joining the colours. Some of the owners, he believed, would be ‘ruined if the vessels remained idle for much longer’.²⁴⁸ Saunders suggested a compromise which meant that three quarters of all fishing vessels should be crewed by Englishmen and the ‘remainder properly certified Belgians’.²⁴⁹ After considering the matter, the DSFC decided to carry the motion unanimously.

Another proposed alternative was the introduction of motor power. The Government had provided ‘£2,000 for experimentation with motor power in trawlers, including installation of a motor capstan for each vessel’.²⁵⁰ The fishermen, who were in this proposition, were invited to register their interest with the DSFC and to meet Stephen Reynolds, the ISWF, to discuss the utilisation of motor engines on their boats.²⁵¹ However, it was clear in May 1915 that despite the prospect of introducing motor power in some fishing vessels, the issue of manpower continued to hamper the fishing industry in Brixham as 800 fishermen from the town had enlisted into the Navy.²⁵² According to a correspondent from the *Western Times*, there were 25 fishing boats that were idle in

²⁴⁶ DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, 7 January 1914 - 12 January 1922, *Western Morning News*, 7 January 1915, p. 40.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Samantha Little, *Through cloud and sunshine: Brixham and the Great War* (Brixham: Brixham Heritage Museum, 2008) p. 14.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Western Times*, 19 February 1915, p. 7, ‘Captain William Pillar: A Devon Hero’ in R. Pearse Chope ed., ‘*Devonian Year Book 1916*’ (London: The London Devonian Association, 1916) p. 24.

the port and that many of the boats that were going to sea were short-handed.²⁵³ However, despite these difficulties, the fishermen obtained the same ‘result from their labour as they would under normal conditions’.²⁵⁴ Even into the autumn of 1915, Reynolds revealed in a letter to H. G. Maurice that fishermen in Devon and the Westcountry continued to experience considerable difficulty to get ‘crews for winter herrings and mackerel, even for motor boats’.²⁵⁵ In fact, he warned Maurice that if they were to lose more fishermen then ‘we shall be in an awful mess’.²⁵⁶ In light of his personal experience, Reynolds believed that the ‘fishing community ought to be reserved by the admiralty’.²⁵⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 1, the fishermen of both Devon and Cornwall had volunteered for the Navy. In his opinion, the naval experience of these men meant that they were indispensable and he was adamant that fishermen could not be easily replaced by ‘suffragettes’.²⁵⁸ Reynolds argued that, unlike work within agriculture, women were unable to adapt to the conditions of sea fishing. He also stressed that these men were able to produce the only food that did not require cultivation and which did not ‘take money out of the country’.²⁵⁹ Indeed, from the perspective of Devon’s fishermen, if replacement labour was used on Devon’s fishing boats then this would have freed the men up for service in the Navy.

For the fishermen who continued to fish in Devon’s waters during 1915, they had to withstand the increased demands for food and the limited fishing zone close to the South Devon shoreline established by the admiralty’s restrictions.²⁶⁰ One particular area that was prohibited by the Admiralty for Devon’s fishing trawlers before the war was

²⁵³ *Western Times*, 5 May 1915, p. 5.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Stephen Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. by Harold Wright (Richmond: Hogarth press, 1923) p. 210.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ M. G. Dickinson ed., *A Living from the Sea: Devon’s Fishing Industry and its Fishermen* (Exeter: Devon Books, 1987) p. 9.

Start Bay. This particular stretch of coastline contained the entrance to the River Dart estuary which was in constant use by the Navy's vessels. However, during the second half of 1914, under the conditions of war, Brixham's fishermen petitioned the Admiralty for the restrictions to be revoked. Eventually on 11 March 1915, the BAF decided to re-open Start Bay as a trial for the fishermen over two years.²⁶¹ Nonetheless, the DSFC pressed to appeal against the Admiralty's restrictions upon fishing practices in the waters of the South Devon coast on 8 July 1915. The reason behind this was that many fishermen blamed the Admiralty's strict regulations for stopping small rowing boats from fishing along with the practice of fishing by night, which caused 'a great deal of destitution among fishermen'.²⁶² Captain Manley argued that if the Admiralty would allow 'small rowing boats to fish for lobsters and crabs, it would be a great boon to the men'.²⁶³ Mr Windeatt reported that the Civil Distress Committee (CDC) at Totnes had recommended that something should be 'done in cases where Trawlers could not go out because of so many men joining the Navy'.²⁶⁴ Mr Sanders believed that the suffering of the fishing industry at Brixham arose 'partly from the Admiralty regulations, but largely owing to the number of men who had left for the war'.²⁶⁵ This was particularly evident in the Brixham fleet because the restrictions across the whole of Start Bay were affecting 150 to 200 vessels.²⁶⁶ The chairman suggested that there should be representations made in relation to the 'damage of the crab pots and in regard to the stoppage of fishing by night to the Admiralty and the committee of the Prince of Wales relief fund'.²⁶⁷ In reply to Captain Willies, the chairman said that this would be done, with a view to getting compensation. Mr Vicary remarked that in fact all of

²⁶¹ DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, 7 January 1914 – 12 January 1922, *Western Guardian*, 11 March 1915, p. 43.

²⁶² DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, 7 January 1914 – 12 January 1922, *Western Morning News*, 8 July 1915, p. 56.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Devon's fishermen were suffering from economic depression and if the fishermen were to pick one class for compensation 'he did not know where they would end and who was going to pay it'.²⁶⁸ Subsequently, Mr Perry questioned the wisdom of applying for compensation for the loss sustained by the owners of vessels.

The Chairman said that the issue of compensation must be dealt with by 'private pressure and not by establishing a general line'.²⁶⁹ If it were done through a general line, he was concerned that this 'would open the door to a flood of applications for all sorts of things'.²⁷⁰ In response to their application on behalf of the owners of fishing vessels, the CDC replied that they would not entertain the application and refused to have anything to do with substituting property or trade. However, as a compromise, they would try to relieve the affected fishermen 'in regard to personal expenses'.²⁷¹ At the following meeting, after very little success Mr Sander's moved that the Earl of Morely be asked to use his influence with both the BAF and the Admiralty on 'behalf of the men in question to their distress caused by the war'.²⁷² Yet, it is clear in the reports of the DSFC that the prospect of compensation was not discussed in the later meetings of 1915. This suggests that the enquiries about compensation for the Brixham fishermen with the Earl of Morley continued to meet with little success.

Tourism in 1915

The holiday season of 1914 had shown to Devon's tourism industry how vulnerable the industry was to the 'totalizing logic' of mobilization. According to John Walton, the seaside resorts in Belgium were the most obvious holiday locations to suffer during the

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² *Ibid.*

war, due to their proximity to the battlefield.²⁷³ Devon's seaside resorts such as Ilfracombe and Exmouth had felt the immediate consequences of the outbreak of war upon their business practices. The businessmen related to the tourism industry in Devon were concerned about what the 1915 holiday season would have in store. The apprehensions that they felt about the fortunes of their industry through the war years was not unwarranted. Upon reviewing the bad state of finances for the Harbour, Ilfracombe Urban District Council (IUDC) voted on 5 January 1915 in a motion carried by 9 votes to 3 that Mr Stentiford should be given a 'notice of discharge for the winter months'.²⁷⁴ However, it became clear that there arose a distinct tension between the pursuit to preserve a pre-war holiday atmosphere and the escalating 'totalizing logic' of mobilization. The attempt to preserve this pre-war holiday atmosphere was evident in the advertisements published by the resorts.

Advertising was a life-line for continuing interest in Devon's holiday industry. In 1915, advertisers for Ilfracombe attempted to combat this by appealing to a consumer's sense of value. One example of this is in the Springtime Resorts brochure, which was published by the London and South Western Railway company (LSWR) in 1915. The leaflet described Ilfracombe as the 'Holiday Magnet of Devon' and claimed that in the North Devon town 'you [will] get more for nothing than any other resort'.²⁷⁵ In addition, the LSWR produced the *Hints for Holidays* booklet which advertised Ilfracombe as an ideal location for a holiday under the tagline that North Devon was the Fairyland of the West. The pamphlet assured the reader that this enchanted location was 'no better place to forget business or home care (not to mention school) whilst enjoying

²⁷³ John Walton, 'The Seaside Resorts of Western Europe, 1750-1939' in S. Fisher ed., *Recreation and the Sea* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997) p. 45.

²⁷⁴ North Devon Record Office: R458A/C25, Ilfracombe Urban District Council Minutes, April 1914 – April 1916, 5 January 1915, p. 195.

²⁷⁵ TNA: RAIL 411/543, LSWR Springtime Resorts – Ideal scenes for early holidays, October 1915, p. 17.

life under its magic health-giving influence'.²⁷⁶ In August 1915, the LSWR also published another leaflet which stressed that Ilfracombe was the 'Holiday Magnet of Lovely Devon' in the hope that this would help the town's summer holiday season of 1915.²⁷⁷ However, some holiday advertising took to heart the government's slogan that business could continue as usual and as a result were unsuccessful in 1915. By practicing this creed, these businesses continued their peacetime advertising campaigns. An example of this was a leaflet published by the Great Western Railway Company (GWR) that was entitled *Yachting in the West*. Despite the sinking of the Lusitania and the presence of U-Boats in the English Channel, the GWR booklet described the 'pleasures to be derived by sailing from Torquay to Penzance'.²⁷⁸ The bombardment of the East coast resorts of Scarborough and Whitby by the German Navy in December 1914 had 'made the south and east coast [resorts] look like risky destinations'.²⁷⁹ However, it is clear that the consequences of mobilization made it clear to the holiday industry that in 1915 it was not business as usual.

On 2 March 1915, Ilfracombe adopted measures to reduce the amount of lighting that was looking out to sea.²⁸⁰ However, the introduction of lighting restrictions in Ilfracombe is an important factor in the explanation as to why the urban economy of the town suffered during 1915. By passing on the choice of whether to accept these restrictions to the Lighting Committee it revealed that the IUDC members were uncertain as to how to respond to this proposed wartime measure. It would appear that the Lighting Committee did not adapt the lighting restrictions in Ilfracombe. This is

²⁷⁶ TNA: RAIL 411/543, LSWR The Fairyland of the West, October 1915, p. 2.

²⁷⁷ Stephen J. Page and Alastair Durie, 'Tourism in Wartime Britain, 1914-18: Adaptation, Innovation and the Role of Thomas Cook & Son' in J. Ateljevic and S. J. Page eds., *Tourism and Entrepreneurship: International Perspectives* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2009) p. 379.

²⁷⁸ STEAM Museum: RY 1990/388, GWR Ideal Winter Holiday Resorts, 1915, p. 31.

²⁷⁹ John K. Walton, 'Leisure Towns in Wartime: The Impact of the First World War in Blackpool and San Sebastian', *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 31, 4 (October 1996)

²⁸⁰ NDRO: R458A/C25, Ilfracombe Urban District Council Minutes, April 1914 – April 1916, 2 March 1915, p. 227.

evident later in the minutes for the meeting held on 1 June 1915. The IUDC agreed in principle that they would douse some lighting which looked outwards towards the Bristol Channel. However, they said that was ‘notwithstanding that certain navigation lights in the vicinity were kept burning’.²⁸¹ Nevertheless, White reveals that the lighting restrictions across Devon during the conflict were regulated unequally and added to the pre-existing tensions in the county.²⁸² An example of this is in reference to the seaside town of Torquay where one Teignmouth resident wrote to the *Teignmouth Post* to complain that while they sat in ‘darkness, we see other towns along the coast where lights are gleaming’.²⁸³ It became clear that the pre-existing contrast between the resorts on the North and South coast of Devon was heightened as a result of the requisitioning of the railway services by the Government.

The plight of the tourism sector was significantly increased by the requisitioning of the railway system. This was evident in Scotland’s tourism industry where without reliable and affordable train services, the economy of the remote Highlands suffered in 1915. In comparison, other areas of Scotland which were less geographically remote, such as Dunoon, enjoyed some measure of success and ‘saw a rise in visitor numbers during the war’.²⁸⁴ The experiences of Scotland’s tourism confirm the argument that the holiday industry during the war was extremely vulnerable without a transport infrastructure to support them.²⁸⁵ In Devon, the railway companies that operated commercial lines through the county had to work with severely limited schedules. Accordingly, the limited schedules of train services had meant that the amount of trade that Devon’s

²⁸¹ NDRO: R458A/C25, Ilfracombe Urban District Council Minutes, April 1914 – April 1916, 1 June 1915, p. 288.

²⁸² Bonnie White, ‘War and the Home Front: Devon in the First World War’, McMaster University, PhD thesis, 2008, pp. 59-68.

²⁸³ *Teignmouth Post*, 19 November 1915, p. 8.

²⁸⁴ Alastair J. Durie and Gayle McPherson, ‘Tourism and the First World War: a Scottish perspective’, *The Local Historian* Vol. 29, 4 (November 1999) p. 253.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

holiday industry could access was restricted. In addition, the number of tourists that travelled to specific destinations also applied to steamships because of the fact that these vessels were requisitioned by the Admiralty for the war effort and the Admiralty also imposed restrictions on certain areas of the British coastline. This was the case with the Isle of Man where the impact of these measures upon the island's holiday industry was devastating.²⁸⁶ Ilfracombe experienced similar problems during the holiday season of 1915. On 2 September 1915, it was reported that Ilfracombe in August would usually be crowded in which its 'white beaches ought to be black with humanity. The capstone ought to be a human ant-hill. Bobbing heads ought very nearly to hide the water in the bathing pools'.²⁸⁷ This led a correspondent of the *North Devon Journal* to confess that this was not the Ilfracombe to which he was familiar with and that 1915 had been a strange season for the seaside town:

There is no denying that Ilfracombe is not itself. The Welshmen from either side of the Bristol Channel are either away at the wars or getting coal for the Navy and arguing how much they ought to be paid for doing it; besides which the curtailment of the cross-Channel passenger traffic has gone a long way to isolating the town.²⁸⁸

In light of the new wartime morality with its language of sacrifice and duty, it was perceived that to take a holiday in 1915 would be an immoral activity. On 4 August 1915, Herbert Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister, launched an attack against the holiday industry. In this statement, Asquith proclaimed an end to the policy of "Business as Usual" which the government had hoped to continue throughout the

²⁸⁶ John Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) p. 77.

²⁸⁷ *North Devon Journal*, 2 September 1915, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

duration of the war. As a result, Asquith sent a stark message that their business activities could not continue as usual since it meant the ‘division of energy which could be better employed in the national interest, either in supplying the needs of our fighting forces in the field or in making commodities for export’.²⁸⁹ However, there were individuals who believed in the importance of Devon’s holiday industry during the war. On 26 June 1915, the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* published an article entitled ‘Holidays in war and peace: Leisured reflections’ by an author under the initials O. S. The article emphasized the values of North Devon’s holiday industry. It suggested that there were hundreds of families in the North Devon towns ‘whose harvest is provided by the holiday maker, who depend for sustenance during the winter on their boarding-house earnings in the summer’.²⁹⁰ The use of a farm analogy is important to emphasise because it was intended for readers to sympathize with the families who operated tourism related businesses in North Devon. Indeed, through this association and the use of a distinctly farming analogy i.e. the harvest would convey to a reader that tourism was their livelihood rather than an unpatriotic activity: ‘sympathetic folk should not, from a mistaken notion that holidays are unpatriotic, withhold the patronage given in former years’.²⁹¹

The author went to great pains to emphasize that the bravery of these families and individuals who, despite being hit hard by the effects of the war, continued to operate against such misfortune. It was a very anxious time for large hotel owners because the idea of abandoning the taking of a holiday would also be bad for British society: ‘We need all the optimism we can muster in this great struggle, for it is the cheerfulness and confidence which will carry us through’.²⁹² Nonetheless, despite the fact that a holiday

²⁸⁹ DHC: R7/6/C/4, Exmouth Urban District Council Minutes, 4 August 1915, p. 181.

²⁹⁰ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 26 June 1915, p. 3.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

in wartime would not offer the same experience as when “‘dove of peace’ spread her wings over the smiling countryside’, there were still joy to found in North Devon’s ‘delightful seascape’. ²⁹³ He argued that delights were to be found for a holiday in the ‘romantic moorland, rambling at will beside rippling stream or ascending heather-clad slopes’. ²⁹⁴ Indeed, he reaffirmed his appeals with the use of sentiments of nostalgia and the power of Devon’s rural iconography which was distinctly associated with the food which was synonymous with the county: ‘How perfectly delightful were the typical Devonshire teas, to which we returned, how beautifully fresh the Devonshire Cream, and how appetising the home-made cakes prepared by our hostess at the farmstead!’. ²⁹⁵ If this failed to convince the readership of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, the author pleaded with them to consider the wartime experiences of children: ‘For the sake of innocent sufferers through the war we must endeavour to cultivate the holiday spirit, and particularly in the interests of children, in whose thoughts dull care should surely find no peace’. ²⁹⁶ He believed that to keep the children from the seaside during the summer of 1915 would ‘not shorten the war by a day, but it may affect the lives of thousands of the rising generation. Let us, then, banish pessimism, and have a sympathetic thought for those whose very livelihood depends on the holiday maker’. ²⁹⁷

Yet, the nationwide mobilization of the armed forces also presented business opportunities to the holiday industry. Walton argues that the seaside town of Blackpool enjoyed success during the war since it possessed a well-established infrastructure. This meant that Blackpool was ideally placed to take advantage of the munitions workers who were seeking free time from the industrial areas in the north-west of England, and

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

had money from their war bonuses to spend on the amusements in the resort.²⁹⁸ The billeting of troops in hotels and the conversion of hotels into convalescence hospitals could also explain the reason why both Brighton and Blackpool experienced some degree of success during the 1915 holiday season.²⁹⁹ Similarly, some hotels were used for the billeting of troops and some were transformed into hospitals for the wounded in the South Devon resorts of Paignton and Torquay. Moreover, both Exeter and Plymouth also benefited from the transportation and billeting of troops.

Conversely, in a *Western Morning News* article from 16 January 1915, some businesses became ruthless in seeking business from military personnel. The correspondent relayed the news that an article in the magazine *Canada* had revealed that Canadian servicemen complained that whilst being stationed in Plymouth they were victimised by locals. This involved local businesses charging high prices to the Canadian contingent otherwise known as ‘fleecing’. This charge against some hostelries was that they had the ‘impudence to charge the Canadians 6d. and 7d. for a bottle of Bass, for which the regular price at that time was 3d.’.³⁰⁰ By 1915, the Tourist Association of the German city of Freiburg saw a decrease of two thirds in the number of inquiries from tourists who were interested in visiting the city when compared to 1914.³⁰¹ Chickering reveals that peacetime patterns of tourism did not disappear altogether because during the 1915 summer season ‘some of the wealthy resumed their annual pilgrimages from North Germany to the resorts of the Black Forest’.³⁰² Furthermore, hotel operators in Freiburg adapted to the conditions of wartime tourism where ‘a major portion of the guests

²⁹⁸ Walton, ‘Leisure Towns in Wartime’, pp. 603-618.

²⁹⁹ Walton, ‘The Seaside Resorts of Western Europe, 1750-1939’, p. 45, Walton, ‘Leisure Towns in Wartime’, p. 610.

³⁰⁰ *Western Morning News*, 16 January 1915, p. 8.

³⁰¹ Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany, Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 112.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

comprised friends and relatives' of soldiers recovering in Freiburg's hospitals.³⁰³ Hence, within this environment, military personnel and their families were viewed as wartime tourists before they were transferred to the battlefield and as such were a reliable source of disposable income.

These were some of the ways in which tourism businesses were able to recuperate their wartime losses. The discrepancy between the success of South Devon resorts and those situated on North Devon's coast was further amplified by the fact that the former accommodated troops and the latter did not. From a strategic perspective, the railway infrastructure in Devon meant that Torquay and other South Devon seaside resorts were perfect locations to billet troops, since they were to be transported to the port of Plymouth, whereas, billeting troops in the North Devon resorts such as Ilfracombe and Bideford would have been more costly and taken more time. Moreover, the risk of attack on the resorts of the East coast had, as a consequence, produced a 'geographical concentration of demand on West Coast, South Coast and West of England resorts'.³⁰⁴ Yet, the fact that troops were not billeted in Ilfracombe was an important factor in why IUDC pursued compensation in 1915 with the Board of Trade (BT) for the loss of trade as a result of the war.

During a meeting of 2 November 1915, the clerk reported to IUDC that during the last meeting of the Executive of the Urban District Council's Association a 'resolution was submitted to ask the Government to institute an inquiry into the loss and destitution in East Coast towns caused by the War with a view to the same being relieved by the Imperial Exchequer'.³⁰⁵ Consequently, IUDC took great interest into the prospect of the

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

³⁰⁴ Page and Durie, 'Tourism in Wartime Britain. 1914-18', p. 359

³⁰⁵ NDRO: R458A/C25, Ilfracombe Urban District Council Minutes, April 1914 – April 1916, 2 November 1915, p. 389.

East Coast towns receiving compensation for their losses. After discussion between IUDC members, it was resolved that the resolution should be drafted so that ‘it applied to other than East Coast Towns and would thus include Ilfracombe’.³⁰⁶ The clerk also drew the IUDC’s attention to the answer recently given by the ‘President of the Local Government Board in the House of Commons in which he stated that the scheme for alleviation of exceptional distress in watering places would include any town which could satisfy him that it had suffered in a peculiar degree from the effects of the war’.³⁰⁷ It was on this backing that the clerk suggested that IUDC should pass a resolution to ask that ‘Ilfracombe might be included in the scheme’.³⁰⁸ The scheme was passed and it was resolved that an application should be made to the President of the Local Government Board (LGB) which would ‘include Ilfracombe in the list of towns to be relieved’.³⁰⁹ Yet, it is clear that the suffering of the holiday industry spurred IUDC to submit a claim for compensation from the BT on 16 June 1915 for the losses that they claimed were as a result of the war.

In the compensation case for Ilfracombe harbour, IUDC members put forward a defence that contended that the main factor behind the resort’s misfortunes was that Admiralty had commandeered the boats that ran between Ilfracombe and Cardiff.³¹⁰ This had led to dramatic reduction in the steamer traffic that Ilfracombe could offer to its holidaymakers. IUDC claimed that as a result of this reliance upon passenger traffic, the revenue for Ilfracombe harbour had incurred a very serious loss not only to IUDC, ‘but also to the town, which is largely dependent on visitors for its support’.³¹¹ According to IUDC’s claim, 1914 had ‘promised to be a very good year and the receipts for the

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ TNA: MT 10/1838, Harbours: Financial Position of the Pier and Harbour undertaking at Ilfracombe, 1915, 16 June 1915, folio 1.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, folio 2.

period April to August showed an increase of £135 over those for the corresponding period in 1913'.³¹² Their claim also declared that the loss of revenue at the harbour had taken a larger toll upon the business of the town. It also documented that the receipts for the year which ended 31 March 1915 had fallen to '£3,586 as compared with £4,406 in the previous years leaving the Council with a deficit of £448'.³¹³ IUDC's claim stressed that the outlook for 1916 was 'even blacker as the estimated receipts from pier tolls, which usually amount to about £2,000, one only £65 and the Council have to face a probable deficit [of] over £2,800'.³¹⁴ Indeed, IUDC had to face the question of 'making good the deficit in the harbour revenue out of the general district rate as provided by section 99 of their Act of 1905'.³¹⁵ This would have entailed an 'addition of 1/3 to the rates, which now amount to £10 and 2 shillings'.³¹⁶ According to IUDC, it was 'very improbable that such a rate could be levied in the present position of things at Ilfracombe, which has not been compensated like many other places by the presence of Soldiers for the loss of the greater part of its usual visitors'.³¹⁷

In their response to IUDC's claim for compensation, W. Roper pointed out that the BT had 'no money with which they could give or lend to the Council'.³¹⁸ However, the BT added the condition that if IUDC could induce their creditors to forgo the payments of 1915 in respect of their repayment of loans, they would 'consider favourably an application for an extension of the period for the repayment of loans, or if the Council could obtain the Sanction of the Treasury an application for a further loan to cover the

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, folio 3.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ TNA: MT 10/1838, Harbours: Financial Position of the Pier and Harbour undertaking at Ilfracombe, 1915, Letter from W. Roper to clerk of Ilfracombe Urban District Council, 15 June 1915, folio 8.

deficit'.³¹⁹ Roper acknowledged that the position of Ilfracombe's harbour was indeed 'closely bound up with that of the town as a whole [and] that the deputation would do well to pay a visit to the L.G.B. who might be able to give them more assistance than the B.T.'. ³²⁰ The deputation from Ilfracombe decided to pursue the case with W. Ball of the LGB. However, the BT was doubtful about IUDC's chances to claim compensation for the loss of trade because it was 'not alleged that the Council's financial difficulties are due to the interference of the navy and military authorities so there would appear to be no case for compensation'.³²¹ The report concluded that the Government could not accept the 'responsibility of extricating harbour authorities from financial embarrassments caused by the war even if the authority is in no way responsible and could not have avoided their difficulties'.³²²

For the remainder of 1915, the minutes for IUDC reveal no further reference to the issue of compensation. It can be deduced that IUDC received a similar response from the LGB and decided not to pursue their case for reimbursement any further. Consequently, it is clear that the war did have a more substantial impact upon Ilfracombe's economy. In their reflection on Ilfracombe in 1915, the *North Devon Journal* revealed that the year would be remembered as a 'disastrous one for the trade of the town. In some respects it was much worse than 1914, for in that year the service of boats was maintained to the end of July. But no steamers at all came during the past summer'.³²³ Hence, the many traders who specifically catered to boat passengers 'felt the loss very severely'.³²⁴ Subsequently, the funds for Ilfracombe Pier revealed at the end of the financial year that the general ratepayer would have to bear the cost, as they had also

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ TNA: MT 10/1838, Harbours: Financial Position of the Pier and Harbour undertaking at Ilfracombe, 1915, Board of Trade File, 11 June 1915, folio 4.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ *North Devon Journal*, 30 December 1915, p. 3.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

suffered a heavy loss.³²⁵ Undeniably, the lack of excursion fares had made a ‘great difference to the number of visitors arriving, although this had not been so noticeable during the very few weeks of the holidays called “the height of the season,” as during the months before and after that period’.³²⁶ It had been hoped, according to the *North Devon Journal*, that the ‘comparative insecurity of some other health resorts would have been to the benefit of Ilfracombe, but this expectation was not realised’.³²⁷ As a result, during the winter of 1915-1916, Morgan reveals that several businesses including hotels and over 100 people, the majority of them being boarding house keepers, defaulted on rate payments and electricity bills at Barnstaple bankruptcy court.³²⁸ However, IUDC was not the only body to place the preservation of the town’s tourism businesses higher than national survival in the attempt to claim compensation.

In 1915, the business activities of the Exmouth Dock Company (EDC) were inextricably linked to the fortunes of Exmouth’s tourism industry. Indeed, they owned several steamships which operated tours in Lyme Bay and relied on tourists for their income. Yet, it was suggested at a meeting of the Local Engineers at Exeter on 8 July 1915 that the company’s capstan lathe and all the engineering equipment should be requisitioned for the manufacture of shells. At the same time, the EDC had entered into an agreement with the Admiralty to work on the repairs for their vessels.³²⁹ In their defence, the EDC responded to these appeals with the statement that their lathe was indispensable for their work with the Admiralty in order to back up their commitment to the war. The EDC offered a compromise in which they were ‘willing to undertake the

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ Nigel John Morgan, ‘Perceptions, Patterns and Policies of Tourism: The development of the Devon seaside resorts during the Twentieth Century with special reference to Torquay and Ilfracombe’, University of Exeter, PhD thesis, 1991, p. 158, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 December 1915, p. 10.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

manufacture of shells at its own works'.³³⁰ During the same meeting, the secretary reported to the board members that the EDC's steamship the King Edward had stopped running on 26 June 1915 because of the Admiralty's interference with the timetable of the vessel. However, it appears that the King Edward was not the only steamer whose schedules had been stopped by the Admiralty, as the management had instructed the secretary and chairman to formulate the claim to cover 'for the loss to [the] Company through stoppage of all the steamers'.³³¹

Yet, after the secretary had lodged EDC's indemnity claim with the Compensation Commission, he doubted 'whether the Commission would make any allowance on the grounds that the stoppage was due to a general and not to a particular order'.³³² His remarks were prophetic, because when their claim for compensation was heard on 4 November 1915 before the Defence of the Realm Losses Commission (DRLC) it was decided that there was 'no interference with the property or the business of the Company in respect of which payment ought to be made to them out of Public funds'.³³³ Despite the fact that the DRLC was created to handle compensation cases as a result of the war, it was focused on the indemnity cases arising from the disruption caused by the Defence of the Realm Act of 1914 (DORA). In his history of Public Requisition, G. R. Rubin points out that the DRLC was established under the 'royal prerogative to disburse compensation as appropriate on a *ex gratia* basis'.³³⁴ From its inception, the DRLC excluded prospective loss and instead awarded compensation only for the damage or

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ DHC: 6039B/M2, Exmouth Dock, Pier and Steamship Company: Board of Director's Minutes, 1900-1920, 8 July 1915, p. 155.

³³² DHC: 6039B/M2, Exmouth Dock, Pier and Steamship Company: Board of Director's Minutes, 1900-1920, 7 October 1915, p. 165.

³³³ DHC: 6039B/M2, Exmouth Dock, Pier and Steamship Company: Board of Director's Minutes, 1900-1920, 4 November 1915, p. 167

³³⁴ G. R. Rubin, *Private Property, Government Requisition and the Constitution, 1914-1927* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), p. 176.

'direct loss suffered as a result of requisitioning'.³³⁵ Since it was only the operation of the EDC's vessels that had been affected by the Admiralty, the EDC had little chance to gain compensation.

Conclusion

The intensification of the processes of 'self-mobilization' in recruitment efforts had not produced the results that the 'provincial patriots' yearned for. The task to reinvigorate recruitment efforts in Devon within the limitations of the voluntary system during 1915 was a challenging one. It was hoped that the ignorance and indifference towards recruitment which pervaded some districts of Devon could be combated through the efforts of the 'provincial patriots' to educate Devonians and effectively convey to them the importance of military service. However, the spectre of disappointment haunted recruitment efforts in Devon during 1915. The recruitment marches were, in reality, of only mixed success in stimulating enlistment rates in the county. Nevertheless, the 'provincial patriots' persevered in their attempts to work within the restrictions of voluntary recruitment. Fortescue recalls in his memoirs that the route-marches of 1915 in the 'other parts [of Devon] though reinforced by bandsmen and chara bancs effected little' change amongst the county's men-folk.³³⁶ In fact, the route-marches produced varied results and revealed a vast contrast in the attitudes towards military service in all the parishes of Devon. Many of the route-marches further exposed the depth of indifference that was felt by some of Devon's men-folk towards military service. These marches also revealed the grave extent of frustration felt by the county's 'provincial patriots' and recruiting officials in their endeavours to convince potential recruits. At the same time, other districts of Devon were applauded for high recruitment rates. Conversely, in many cases, the appeals of the 'provincial patriots' on these route-

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 32.

marches failed to convince some Devonians to enlist and did not reconcile the tension between individual priorities and national ones.

The discourses of recruitment relied upon a strong identification of local and county identity, the rhetoric of regional consciousness and the narrative of historical heroic obligation which were intended to convince Devon's men-folk of their responsibilities to enlist. The representation of the Devonshire Regiment as a centre for county identity was also an important aspect in the discourses of recruitment. Nevertheless, despite their best efforts to reinvigorate enlistment rates in Devon, the 'provincial patriots' were less than fully successful in their campaigns to convince some Devonians to volunteer and sacrifice individual survival for national survival. The indifferent responses of Devon's farmers to military service were indicative of how patriotism was not solely driven by militaristic sentiment in the county. This led to the idea of forming a farmers Pals' Battalion in the hope that it would convince Devon's farmers and their sons to enlist. However, both the first and second chapter of this thesis reinforce the suggestion made by White that the raising of Pals' Battalions in Devon did not find much success. Despite the hope to raise a unit of 250 men, only 17 men had volunteered to join Exeter Pals' Battalion. According to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, around fifty per cent of those who volunteered for this Pals' Battalion came from 'outside the boundaries of Devon's ancient and loyal capital'³³⁷ It is clear that the low recruitment figures in 1914 and 1915 had significantly damaged Devon's patriotic reputation. This was evident during a House of Common's Debate on 29 July 1918. Mr Dillon, the Irish Parliamentary Party MP for East Mayo contended that up to the spring of 1915 Ireland had participated more enthusiastically in the war than some regions of Great Britain.³³⁸ To validate his position, he argued that the people of Ireland's county districts were

³³⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 1 January 1915, p. 2.

³³⁸ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 109, 29 July 1918, Column 91.

'recruiting far more freely than in Devonshire or Cornwall'.³³⁹ He evoked the poor response of Devon's recruitment efforts as a poignant example to construct a stark contrast between the patriotism of Ireland's rural districts with those of Great Britain.

Nonetheless, Devonians found other ways to present their patriotism, such as the county's farmers who emphasised that to enlist in the Army was not the only way to present their patriotism. The success of charities reveals how the languages which expressed self-mobilization, resonated deeply with Devonians who were outside the requirements for military service or who wanted to present their involvement with the war effort rather than fight overseas. Charitable work was a means which individuals regardless of gender or age could gain moral citizenship in the wartime community of the Home Front. Devonians responded in a humanitarian way to the presence of the troops during the recruitment marches by showing their patriotism in their emotional support of the Devonshire Regiment in particular through the donation of food items. For pre-existing philanthropic organisations within the Diocese of Exeter, the war provided them with cause for concern since they faced stiff competition for donations from war charities. However, their fears proved unfounded as the pre-existing charities were supported with donations from Devon's population. This meant that in 1915, local charities and institutions were just as important as war charities. For individuals who were part of Devon's civic society, the philanthropic activities associated with the Belgian Refugees created internal divisions. In particular, these divisions were created by Earl Fortescue and the Mayor of Exeter, who competed over the jurisdiction of the Committee and was the authority over the Belgian Refugees. Yet, the volume of egg donations from the county's populace revealed that this form of self-mobilization resonated amongst the different communities of Devon. Despite the fact that the NECW

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

has not received the recognition of other war charities in narratives of the Home Front, it was a significant and popular charity to Devonians.

The introduction of the DWAC was a form of intervention into the practices of farming in the county. However, the issue of manpower for agriculture was a delicate issue for farmers which went to the heart of how patriotism manifested itself in many discourses. Instead of the prospect of military service, farmers believed that to produce food for the nation was their patriotic duty. Similarly, Devon's sea fishermen also encountered similar problems in the debates surrounding manpower for their industry. The Brixham fishermen who continued to fish in 1915 had to work within the restrictions imposed by the Admiralty. This, along with the declining number of fishermen in Devon, meant that many fishing vessels that went to sea were only half manned or remained idle. The concerns over the survival of their livelihoods were paramount in their minds which led the Brixham fishermen to make enquires about whether they could claim compensation from the Admiralty for the disruption to their trawling and for the losses to their livelihoods. Eventually, the fishermen were informed by multiple sources that their attempt to claim compensation would be unsuccessful.

The plight of Devon's tourism industry during the holiday season of 1915 revealed a tension between the attempt to preserve a pre-war holiday atmosphere and the demands of the escalating 'totalizing logic' of mobilization. In light of the new wartime morality, it became clear that the businesses related to the holiday industry had to adapt to the business opportunities that mobilization presented. Nevertheless, to the businesses related to tourism, the survival of their industry through the uncertainty of the 1915 holiday season was of the paramount importance. However, South Devon's resorts experienced a more fortunate season in 1915 than those in North Devon. This prompted

IUDC to attempt to claim compensation through the BT. Therefore, IUDC assumed that the BT would be more sympathetic towards Ilfracombe's plight and its claim, rather than if the claim had been made through the military authorities. However, IUDC was unsuccessful in their attempt to claim compensation. At the same time, the EDC put forward a claim with the DRLC for the losses that they had incurred due to the fact that the Admiralty had requisitioned their steamships for the war effort. Yet, this attempt also failed to convince the DRLC to grant compensation to the EDC. Nevertheless, both of these attempts to gain compensation reveal the lengths to which these authorities placed the preservation of their business interests over the interests of the nation.

This chapter has revealed that in 1915 whilst there was a tension between individual and national survival there was also a tension between state driven totalization and voluntarism. Volunteerism in Devon during 1915 manifested itself in other ways than recruitment and these were more generally successful. However, in respect of charitable efforts, the spirit of volunteerism was successful in the name of the war effort as seen in the support of charities to help the Belgian Refugees and the donation of large numbers of eggs. Yet, at the same time, the volunteering ethos was unable to convince or persuade some Devonians of the necessity of military service. Devon's elite were intermediaries of the war experience but they struggled to educate and convince all of the county's population the importance of not only the war but also the measures which represented the totalization of the war effort and were deemed necessary for victory. They were agents of the war effort to which they exhorted the measures that attempted to push forward this 'totalizing logic'. However, the desire to achieve a more 'total' war effort was one matter but to accomplish it was another. The intensification of voluntary mobilization as advocated by the county's elite relied upon moral coercion and persuasion. Yet, Devon's population responded to these measures in an ambiguous

manner which reveals a deeper and complex relationship to the war effort than has previously been established. Chickering suggests the schematic analysis which emphasizes the logic of warfare's totalization during the early months of the war was not altogether wrong. He proposes the 'initial processes of mobilization were guided by a logic that they [contemporaries] lacked'.³⁴⁰ The idea of a co-ordinated 'totalizing logic' during the beginning stages of the war 'simplifies the complex relationships between military requirements and economic reorganisation'.³⁴¹ In Devon, there were forms of mobilization that did not necessarily fit into this phenomenon of an all-encompassing 'totalizing logic' of mobilization. Hence, the forms of mobilization that were popular with the county's populace were not part of this dizzying escalation of mobilization. This meant that Devon's elites were anxious to navigate through the ambiguous and complex terrain of self-mobilization that was evident in the responses from some Devonians.

The intensification of the processes of self-mobilization struggled to reconcile the tension between individual survival and national survival. At a recruiting demonstration in Barnstaple on 4 November 1915, Major Leyland, an Army Recruiter, characterised the motto of "Business as Usual" as the 'curse of the Country'.³⁴² It had, according to Leyland, provided people with the excuse to stay at home 'in order to sell 4d. worth of something, but they could depend upon it that that was no good'.³⁴³ Indeed, Leyland's comments on the depths to which some of Devon's men-folk continued to make excuses against the prospect of military service as some men continued to ask that if they volunteered "How will business be done if we go?"³⁴⁴ The indifferent responses and the discrepant results of recruitment in Devon led to speculation by local notables that

³⁴⁰ Chickering, 'World War I and the Theory of Total War', p. 38.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *North Devon Journal*, 4 November 1915, p. 6.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

the limits of the voluntary system of recruiting had been reached.³⁴⁵ Similarly, at a meeting in Dorchester convened by the Lord Lieutenant of the Dorset, Colonel John Mount Batten, several speakers expressed the opinion that the ‘limit of voluntary recruiting had been reached, and the Chairman said the only thing to do now was to adopt some form of compulsion’.³⁴⁶

At the same time, it was clear that Devon’s population recognised the intensification of the war and the “totalizing logic” of mobilization for total war. In their annual report for 1915, the Baptists of the East Devon town of Bradninch believed that the war was taking an emotional toll upon their community: ‘all [of] our thoughts have been coloured by the war conditions and most rationally we have been asking ourselves what message the church of Christ has for the nations’.³⁴⁷ This emphasizes Annette Becker’s point that the fusion of religious and patriotic sentiments continued throughout the war.³⁴⁸ Moreover, it presents how some Devonians turned to religion as a mediator of the war experience.³⁴⁹ Indeed, the ‘numerous cultural mobilizations and remobilizations, and the various “sacred unions” can be understood as the continuous interaction of the political and spiritual’.³⁵⁰ This was evident in some responses from the clergy in Devon to the prospect of conscription. In June 1915, Alfred Earle, the Dean of Exeter, advocated a stronger position in that if conscription were introduced it would ‘lead the way to the higher life’.³⁵¹ However, Earle’s statement became the subject of irony in a

³⁴⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 18 May 1915, p. 3.

³⁴⁶ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 May 1915, p. 3.

³⁴⁷ DHC: Acc:6785, Church Minute Books (with membership roll), 20 December 1915, p. 48.

³⁴⁸ Annette Becker, ‘Faith, Ideologies, and the “Cultures of War”’, in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 237

³⁴⁹ Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*, trans. by Helen McPhail (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

³⁴⁹ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 161

³⁵⁰ Becker, ‘Faith, Ideologies, and the “Cultures of War”’, p. 237.

³⁵¹ *The New Age*, 10 June 1915 p. 139.

satirical poem by W. N. Ewer entitled *The Only Way*.³⁵² The poem went on to emphasize how the Dean had suggested that the war offered spiritual redemption like a crusade in which he had found the keys to heaven for the entire nation.³⁵³ To achieve salvation was at hand and all that mankind needed for this was conscription.³⁵⁴ After Herbert Asquith decided to form a Coalition Government in May 1915, it faced the dilemma that the recruitment system was so dilapidated that it could not cope with the demands for manpower for the armed forces.³⁵⁵ In response to this, the Director-General of Recruiting, Lord Derby, introduced the Derby Scheme in October 1915 which was the ‘one last effort to uphold the voluntary principle’.³⁵⁶ It was a registration scheme where ‘men would “attest” that they were ready to serve if called on, and where single men would be taken before married men’.³⁵⁷ It was hoped that the so-called Derby Scheme would remedy the faltering voluntary system of recruitment. However, the statistics of the Derby Scheme revealed that the appeals for men to attest had been more successful amongst married men than single men.³⁵⁸ Under the Scheme, 1.35 million married men had attested because they believed Asquith’s assurance that single men would be called upon to serve first.³⁵⁹ At the same time, the figures for male bachelors were not as high. Out of the 2.2 million single men of military age that were detailed as available on the National Register, just over a million had ignored Derby’s appeal.³⁶⁰ Of the 840,000 single men who did attest, more than ‘half a million were employed in

³⁵² W. N. Ewer, ‘The Only Way’ in V. Noakes ed., *Voices of Silence: The alternative book of First World War poetry* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2006) p. 140.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ Richard Toye, *Lloyd George & Churchill: Rivals for Greatness* (London: Macmillan, 2007) p. 145, John Morton Osborne, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain, 1914-1916* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982) pp. 130-133, Stevenson, *1914-1918*, pp. 202-203.

³⁵⁶ Peter Simkins, *Kitchener’s Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-1916* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2007) p. 150.

³⁵⁷ Nicholas Mansfield, ‘Volunteers and Recruiting’ in G. Gliddon ed., *Norfolk & Suffolk in the Great War* (Norwich: Gliddon Books, 1988) p. 26.

³⁵⁸ Gerard J. De Groot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1996) p. 94.

³⁵⁹ John Turner, *British Politics and the Great War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 73.

³⁶⁰ De Groot, *Blighty*, p. 94

reserved occupations and almost 200,000 [men were] rated as unfit for service'.³⁶¹ Consequently, the Derby Scheme failed to convince the key male demographic that the Government hoped would register for the Scheme. This meant that when Lord Derby presented his main report on the Derby Scheme on 20 December 1915, it was clear that the hope to uphold the voluntary tradition of recruitment had vanished.³⁶² It was this report that 'effectively removed the last major obstacle to compulsory military service'.³⁶³ After the Derby Scheme's failure, the Coalition Government replaced the voluntary system of recruitment in 1916 with the introduction of conscription in England, Wales and Scotland with the Military Service Act. Hence, the demands of the war effort necessitated 'greater co-ordination and centralization of services and functions'.³⁶⁴ The Act had ramifications beyond recruitment to dramatically affect wartime politics on the Home Front and the very definition of wartime citizenship. However, the implementation of conscription in Devon gave the 'provincial patriots' a means to extend their campaigns of superintending the patriotism of Devon's men-folk as well as a new platform to broadcast and prescribe acceptable codes of wartime behaviour to the county's population.

³⁶¹ James McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918: 'A very much abused body of men'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) pp. 13-14.

³⁶² Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, p. 156.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ Anne Rasmussen, 'Science and Technology' in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 314.

Chapter 3:

The changing dynamics of wartime citizenship

1916

Introduction

By 1916, the faltering pace of recruitment across Great Britain during 1915 had led many politicians and army recruiters to conclude that the existing system of voluntary recruitment was inadequate.¹ According to Adrian Gregory, a popular sense had grown across Britain that the voluntary system had become ‘inequitable with the patriotically minded, including the fathers of families, being exploited, whilst others shamelessly shirked their duty’.² Notwithstanding the claim that Devon was one of the most loyal and patriotic counties in England, recruitment figures from the county since the beginning of the conflict were lower than Devon’s neighbouring counties.³ During 1915, the campaign to reinvigorate the fortunes of voluntary recruitment in Devon had been met with decidedly mixed success. Whilst recruitment figures from certain districts of Devon were on the rise, there were still many instances where this intensified campaign of voluntary recruitment failed to change the minds of Devon’s men-folk who, in the view of the recruiters, placed self-interest above national interest and their own individual priorities over those of the nation.⁴

This was evident in January 1916 when Tremar resident Edrica de la Pole noted in her diary that when Bill, the local blacksmith of the South Devon village of Kingston, had

¹ John Morton Osborne, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain, 1914-1916* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982) pp. 130-133, Keith Grieves, *The Politics of Manpower, 1914-18* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) pp. 19-24,

² Adrian Gregory, ‘Britain and Ireland’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 408.

³ *The Cornishman and Cornish Telegraph*, 6 January 1916, p. 3.

⁴ Bonnie J. White, ‘Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914 - December 1915’, *The Historical Journal* Vol. 52, 3 (2009) pp. 641-666, *Western Times*, 20 February 1915, p. 4, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 3 September 1915, p. 2.

protested against being called up under the Derby Scheme she concluded that the men of Kingston ‘all find the War “all right” until it touches them – then they yelp’.⁵ In the case of the village blacksmith, de la Pole reveals that Bill is the last in the line of a family of blacksmiths who had continued to support the business for 150 years.⁶ De la Pole’s assessment emphasises how some of Devon’s men-folk continued to regard the War with indifference and were more concerned with local priorities. This attitude remained until the conflict had intruded upon the possibility of their individual survival through the war years and once this intrusion was established the county’s men painfully protested against it. Hence, the indifference and hesitation exhibited by some of Devon’s men-folk towards the appeals to enlist reinforced the challenges that the ‘provincial patriots’ had to face in their attempts to reconcile the tension between individual survival and national survival. The disappointing experiences of voluntary recruitment efforts in Devon led many Devonians to conclude that voluntary enlistment had reached the limit of what it could achieve in the county. On 11 January 1916, Colonel Sir Robert White-Thomson, the Chairman of the Tavistock Division of the DPRC, remarked pessimistically that if Devon’s men-folk ‘could not rise to the height that the sense of duty should inspire them with, then there was nothing to do but what the continental nations did’.⁷ Indeed, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and other belligerents had previously established systems of compulsory military service.⁸

The legislation that introduced conscription in England, Wales and Scotland was the Military Service Bill (MSB). Before the Bill received Royal Assent, Earl Fortescue attempted to educate the county’s population that the MSB was not a direct continuation

⁵ Plymouth and West Devon Record Office: Acc 1306/24, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1916, 12 January 1916, p. 12.

⁶ PWDRO: Acc 1306/24, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1916, 22 November 1916, p. 327.

⁷ *Western Times*, 11 January 1916, p. 2.

⁸ David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2005) pp. 198-204.

of policies established under the Derby Scheme. After witnessing Fortescue's speech on the MSB to a crowd at South Molton on 20 January 1916, the correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* hoped that Fortescue's remarks would 'perhaps convince some men who desire to shirk their national responsibilities that it will not be quite so easy to gain their wishes as they imagine'.⁹ Based upon some of the responses from Devon's men towards appeals to enlist, it could be ventured that Fortescue intended to warn shirkers that unlike voluntary recruitment they could not evade conscription. Yet, it appeared to the correspondent that conscription would fail to regulate the allocation of manpower that Fortescue hoped to achieve because during the meeting he noted that it was 'more or less [in] common talk that local tribunals [in Devon] are going to be very lenient with those who come before them'.¹⁰ On 10 February 1916, the Military Service Act (MSA) came into force thereby inaugurating conscription in England, Wales and Scotland but not Ireland.¹¹ The Act initially stipulated that conscription would apply only to 'unmarried men, and widowers without children or dependants, between the ages of eighteen and forty-one' and that conscription would not apply to married men or to men who were 'engaged on important war work, the sole supporters of dependants, the unfit and approved conscientious objectors'.¹² Later in May 1916, a second MSA was passed in Parliament which introduced full conscription to extend to all men aged from eighteen to forty-one.¹³ However, the system of conscription heralded by the MSA necessitated the organisation of a vast network of tribunals across England, Wales and Scotland.

⁹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 22 January 1916, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ James McDermott, 'The Work of the Military Service Tribunals in Northamptonshire, 1916-1918', University of Northampton, 2009, PhD Thesis, p. 19.

¹² Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The raising of the new armies, 1914-1916* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2007) p. 156.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Previously, in 1915, a system of around two thousand local tribunals had been established by the LGB under the Derby Scheme. This was a registration scheme where men could attest their willingness to be conscripted when called upon to do so.¹⁴ Yet, this system changed under the MSA as the men who were called up could appeal for exemption against the prospect of being drafted into the Army at local tribunals. These tribunals comprised notable figures from local civil society who had volunteered to face the task of arbitrating upon the appeals for exemption. In addition, the tribunal panels also contained a representative from the military and a representative of the BAF who represented the interests of farmers and fishermen during the hearings which were conducted on both a local and county level. In their judgements of the appeals, the members of tribunals had to ascertain whether the individual was indispensable to their respective employment and decide whether he should or should not be drafted into the Army.¹⁵ Moreover, the MSA also established a new level of tribunal which served each county across England, Wales and Scotland in which ‘applicants [who were] dissatisfied with the decisions of their local Tribunals, had the right to appeal’.¹⁶ At the same time, the Military possessed the right to appeal against the exemptions granted by local tribunals. Consequently, this meant that the implementation of the MSA was not a centralised process. Instead, these appeals against conscription and the demands from the military were adjudicated upon through the efforts of local volunteers and local notables from civil society who constituted the panels of local tribunals.¹⁷ According to James McDermott, these tribunals overwhelmingly comprised of men and in some cases women who ‘were intended in Walter Long’s words to “command public confidence”’

¹⁴ R. J. Q. Adams and Phillip P. Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900-18* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1987) p. 120.

¹⁵ James McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918: 'A very much abused body of men'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) pp. 1-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁷ McDermott, ‘The Work of the Military Service Tribunals in Northamptonshire, 1916-1918’, pp. 177-190.

in the conscription process.¹⁸ In their consideration of individual appeals, members of tribunals had to balance these contending demands between their respective communities and those of the military. This meant that the Military Service Tribunals (MST) provided ‘a site, where agents of the state pursued military manpower in the face of individual opposition and economic interests’.¹⁹ Consequently, these panels helped to determine the provision of manpower for the British Army from 1916 to 1918.

The MSA had immediate ramifications for the Home Front and the British war effort.²⁰ As a result, the system of conscription heralded by the MSA dramatically affected wartime politics on the Home Front and redefined gendered notions of citizenship in the wartime community in Britain.²¹ Nicoletta F. Gullace suggests that the introduction of conscription brought forth the redefinition of wartime citizenship in Britain.²² To some of the British population, conscription represented the failure of male citizenship to recognise that citizenship was defined through national service.²³ At the same time, Susan R. Grayzel argues that ‘changing notions of women’s wartime civic behaviour in Britain and France prompted new debates over the relationship between service and citizenship’.²⁴ These debates were especially poignant in Britain after the introduction of conscription in 1916 because ‘what constituted citizenship and what qualities and/or actions then entitled citizens – including women – to vote became increasingly caught up with how military service and patriotic action were to be recognized’.²⁵ In fact, women could claim wartime citizenship on the Home Front through endeavours such as

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

¹⁹ Pierre Purseigle, ‘Introduction, Warfare and Belligerence: Approaches to the First World War’ in P. Purseigle ed., *Warfare and Belligerence: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Lieden: Brill, 2005) p. 31

²⁰ Adams and Poirier, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain*, pp. 139-143.

²¹ Susan R. Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999) pp. 190-191, 196-197.

²² Nicoletta F. Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) pp. 112-115.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 114

²⁴ Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*, p. 223.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

charitable activities and constituted claims which became a reflection of the strength of their patriotism.²⁶ Grayzel also suggests that the transposition of the term of slacker to apply to women as well as men helped to define ‘women’s service as not a voluntary charity (a luxury) but the fulfilment of an obligation to the country’.²⁷ Indeed, whilst the incorporation of female labour into British industries had previously been slow, it gained momentum ‘after the introduction of military conscription in 1916’.²⁸ Despite the fact that conscription added greater importance and urgency for employers to consider the prospect of female labour to replace the vacuum of manpower, it is clear that not all contemporaries were convinced of the necessity to employ women. Therefore, the impact of conscription on the British Home Front was significant due to the fact that it had ramifications beyond the drafting of manpower for the Military.

This chapter will assess the county of Devon during 1916. Firstly, there will be an analysis of the MSA tribunals in Devon and the individuals from Devon’s civil society that constituted the county’s tribunal panels. However, the process of adjudicating the appeals for conscription from Devon’s men-folk provided the county’s elite with a new avenue to extend their campaign of superintendence of wartime behaviour, the social morality of wartime and the nature of patriotism in Devon. At the same time, Devon’s notables on the Devon Appeal Tribunal (DAT) encountered great difficulties in administering a system of conscription which was universally effective across Devon. It is clear that there was a tension between the priorities of the MSA tribunals in the periphery of Devon and the DAT in the centre.

²⁶ Paul Ward, “‘Women of Britain Say Go’: Women’s Patriotism in the First World War”, *Twentieth Century British History* Vol. 13, 1 (2001) pp. 23-45.

²⁷ Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*, p. 200.

²⁸ K. D. Brown, ‘Industry and Services: Employment and Unemployment’ in C. Wrigley ed., *A Companion to Early Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) p. 309.

Secondly, there will be a reflection on the subject of gender in Devon which will encompass an examination of the experiences of Devon's men and women to claim citizenship on the Home Front during 1916. Previously, the county's women were able to present their patriotism and claim humanitarian citizenship on the Home Front. Yet, Devonians who were outside the requirements of military service continued to view charitable endeavours during 1916 as an important form of mobilization and a vital means to support the war effort. Notwithstanding the introduction of conscription as an example of state driven totalization, the voluntary tradition continued to resonate with the humanitarian sensibilities of Devonians. It will also reveal that attitudes from Devon's residents towards female labour in 1916 did not immediately change. Instead, female labour was met by various farmers and workers in Devon with a begrudging and hesitant reaction. Certain interest groups in Devon were primarily concerned about how to preserve their jobs through the War. These instances further emphasize the prevalence of the tension between individual priorities and national ones in Devon. Therefore, despite the introduction of conscription, Devonians understood the wider importance to maintain the local economy of Devon.

Thirdly, there will be an examination of the threat that was perceived to be posed by some of Devon's residents who were viewed as internal enemies. The rise of Germanophobia led to an obscuring of nationalities on the British Home Front. This was evident with Plymouth's Jewish community who were suspected and targeted as Germans. The Franco-German community of Benedictine Monks at Buckfast Abbey were viewed with similar suspicions by Buckfastleigh's population and the residents of surrounding area who alleged that the monks were German agents. This led to continued attempts by local councillors and MP's to make requests to the Home Office (HO) for Buckfast's monks to be relocated to an internment camp. Subsequently, the

strong anxieties felt by some local residents surrounding the Abbey gave members of Devon's notables valid justification to commence a campaign of vigilance to monitor the wartime behaviour of Buckfast's Monks.

Focusing on 1916 provides an opportunity to examine how conscription changed the Home Front on a local level and show that the local elite did not just arbitrate upon the competing demands of the military and their respective localities when considering the appeals for exemption from military service. Through a critical exploration of Stephen Reynolds's definition of Devon's elite as the superintendents of patriotism, this chapter will instead argue that the county's elite tried to extend their superintendence of the wartime behaviour of Devonians. Like an officer of law and order who would bring a lawbreaker to face justice, several local notables believed that the system of conscription would bring the shirkers into the public gaze through the semi-judicial proceedings of a local tribunal to account for their lacklustre attitude towards military service. They viewed their activities on the panels on local tribunals as a way to bring the men that they deemed to be shirkers in Devon to book in order to face justice before a tribunal board. Devon's tribunals were a form of outreach for the police-men and women of patriotism in which they could attempt to enforce the social morality of wartime and as a platform to broadcast their prescriptions of ideal civilian behaviour to the county's population. In fact, the process of adjudicating upon the verdicts of individual appeals meant that the 'provincial patriots' could attempt to police and control the discourses of patriotism by labelling what behaviour was patriotic and what was not. These value-judgments about the nature of the patriotism of Devon's men from the 'provincial patriots' also reached a wider audience throughout the county with the commentaries of local correspondents being published in the local press. By understanding Devon's tribunals and the local notables who comprised the tribunal

panels as the superintendents of patriotism in this manner, this will provide a deeper understanding of this complicated role for Devon's elite.

Yet despite the 'provincial patriots' ambitions for the effectiveness of conscription in the county, it was clear that the system of conscription was not a universally effective judiciary system for the arbitration of manpower. It became apparent that not all members of the local elite in the county shared the same aspiration to create a truly impartial system of manpower to balance the needs of the local and the military across Devon. Similarly, the efforts of the 'provincial patriots' to prescribe how the county's population should behave and respond to the consequences of conscription were not universally successful. Indeed, the 'provincial patriots' advocated for the monitoring of other individuals in Devon whose loyalty and patriotism they deemed to be in doubt. This chapter will also emphasize that the 'provincial patriots' attempted to resolve the tension between individual survival and national survival which was present in the responses of some Devonians. The evidence presented in this chapter emphasizes the ambiguity and hesitation of some Devonians towards the demands placed upon them in the name of the war effort. It also suggests that Devon's population attempted to navigate through the challenges of 1916 and there people in the county who still did not regard the war effort as an all-embracing principle or consider the war effort to be the pre-eminent issue.

Military Service Tribunals and the policing of patriotism in Devon

When the MSA came into force on 20 February 1916, the system of conscription was primarily arbitrated on a local level. In Devon, appeals for exemption from military service were reviewed primarily through the county's local Tribunals. It was these local tribunals across Devon's rural and urban localities that conducted the hearings and

judgement of the appeals for exemption on a local level. This meant that the tribunals in Devon ‘provided a site, where agents of the state pursued military power in the face of individual opposition and local economic interests’.²⁹ However, if an individual or the Military decided to appeal against the decision of a local tribunal in Devon, their appeal would be subject to a re-examination before a panel of the DAT. The right to appeal against these decisions was an important safeguard for individuals because it was implemented to ‘avoid doing needless damage to the economic fabric of localities, to protect families from unnecessary hardship and to allow the process of conscription to be fair and be seen as fair’.³⁰ In fact, it was the members of these tribunal panels who had the heavy responsibility of applying the criteria of the MSA in order to decide ‘who should be exempted and who should go into the Army, and, as such decisions necessarily had to be based upon consideration of personal circumstances’.³¹ Gregory has argued that the Tribunals in specific localities operated in a very local context, to the extent that ‘tribunals constituted a site in which competing societal interests were weighed up’.³² This meant that Devon’s notables on the county’s local and Appeal Tribunals needed to weigh up in their adjudications competing priorities between the Front and the Home Front including the necessity of military service whilst maintaining food production and industrial output.

The body that undertook the arbitration of appeals against the decisions made by local tribunals in Devon was the DAT which was established on 3 March 1916.³³ The DAT

²⁹ Pierre Purseigle, “‘Wither the Local?’ Nationalization, Modernization, and the Mobilization of Urban Communities in England and France, c. 1900-18” in W. Whyte and O. Zimmer eds., *Nationalism and the reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 197.

³⁰ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 101.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Adrian Gregory, ‘Military Service Tribunals: Civic Society in Action, 1916-1918’ in J. Harris ed., *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 189.

³³ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 4 March 1916, p. 6.

covered the county of Devon as well as the county boroughs of Exeter and Plymouth.³⁴ This meant that the appeals directed to the DAT were allocated between the sessions of three panels and would cover the administrative boundaries of Devon.³⁵ The North Devon panel covered the ‘rural districts of Barnstaple, Bideford, Southmolton, and Torrington, and the urban districts and boroughs within and adjacent to them (sic)’.³⁶ This encompassed a population of about 30,000 with Barnstaple being the normal location where the North Panel of the DAT would meet.³⁷ The South Devon panel consisted of the borough of Plymouth as well as the ‘rural districts of Kingsbridge, Plympton, Totnes, Tavistock, and Broadwoodwidger, within the boroughs and districts within them’.³⁸ This district covered 300,000 of Devon’s populace with Plymouth the place to meet as it was on the border with the Southern District.³⁹ Lastly, the Central panel contained the ‘city of Exeter, the borough of Torquay and the remainder of the county’.⁴⁰

Across the county, it was the men and women who were volunteers from Devon’s civil society which constituted the DAT and arbitrated upon these appeals. One of the DAT’s chairmen was the Tiverton industrialist, Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory.⁴¹ However, it is clear that with his new role as a chairman of the DAT, Heathcoat-Amory wanted to present himself in a more judicial light, despite the fact that he had earned a reputation as a benevolent employer towards his employees. This was evident in the description of him presented in the *Western Times* on 20 April 1916 to mark his birthday. It applauded the work of Heathcoat-Amory as one of ‘Devon’s busy men who yet find time to do a great

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 9 March 1916, p. 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Western Times*, 9 January 1931, p. 2.

deal of work for the general community'.⁴² Yet, as the DAT's Chairman, the correspondent for the newspaper argued that Heathcoat-Amory wielded a 'power in the County that is truly formidable'.⁴³ It was claimed that the impressive power he exercised across Devon as a Chairman of the DAT meant that it was with 'fear and trembling that mere mortals dare to whisper his name'.⁴⁴ The correspondent posited a rhetorical question that the reason for the apprehension of some residents in Devon was that Heathcoat-Amory held the 'Sword of Damocles over the fates of men'.⁴⁵ Through evoking classical mythology (the legend of the Sword of Damocles emphasized the sense of foreboding and inevitable tragedy that lingers over an individual's fate) the correspondent arguably intended to instruct Devon's men that they were all accountable under the system of conscription. In particular, the correspondent warned the newspaper's readership that 'let the trickster beware' because when Heathcoat-Amory reviewed the appeal he would bring them to face justice and he was 'not a man to be easily duped'.⁴⁶ In fact, this portrayal of Heathcoat-Amory asserted that he possessed the 'eye of a hawk for insecurity, and, when he has spotted it, all the tenderness will freeze to withering, but courteous, austerity'.⁴⁷ At the same time, the correspondent reassured the newspaper's readership that to a man standing before the Tribunal panel whose story was sincere they had 'nothing to fear' from Heathcoat-Amory.⁴⁸ Gregory points out that the members of tribunals had to undertake a delicate balancing act to which they 'needed to reflect popular opinion by not tolerating "shirking" whilst at the same time providing adequate benefit of the doubt in dealing with "genuine" cases'.⁴⁹

⁴² *Western Times*, 20 April 1916, p. 11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals', p. 186.

To further reaffirm the sincerity of Heathcoat-Amory as a compassionate but judicious chairman, the correspondent provided a depiction of a typical hearing at the DAT to the readers of the newspaper. This characteristic portrayal was complete with an assessment from Heathcoat-Amory in which when an individual stood before him they would ‘listen to that clear, deep resonate voice, telling you kindly and yet so firmly how urgent is your country’s need’.⁵⁰ During the hearing, an individual would listen to the verdict ‘with dread, and turn to leave the Court in a brain-whirl – your fortunes shattered, your very home, maybe crumbling to atoms around you’.⁵¹ After this realisation, the correspondent proposed that the appellant should accept Heathcoat-Amory’s verdict ‘as you would accept the inevitable’ because a ‘gentleman has truly spoken. Justice has been done. And, which counts more with your troubled soul, you feel that it has been tempered with compassion’.⁵² It could be argued that the *Western Times* columnist also intended to prescribe an expectation of how potential appellants should behave when they are confronted with the unavoidable prospect of military service and possibly even death. They were also presented with how tribunalists judged the rights of the individual against ‘the demands of the nation within a set of rules’.⁵³ Moreover, this portrayal of Heathcoat-Amory was envisioned not only to proclaim the strength of his own abilities and sincerity as the DAT’s chairman but overall command the confidence of the county’s populace in the system of conscription.

Another chairman of the DAT was the recorder of Tiverton, Sir Trehawke Kekewich. He travelled extensively across Devon and assiduously attended the sitting of the three panels of the DAT at Plymouth, Exeter and North Devon.⁵⁴ Other members of the DAT included notable figures from the county, Sidney Redcliff Chope who was the Mayor of

⁵⁰ *Western Times*, 20 April 1916, p. 11.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Gregory, ‘Military Service Tribunals’, p. 189.

⁵⁴ *Western Morning News*, 11 March 1932, p. 8.

Bideford.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the DAT's membership also included three women who were important local dignitaries: Mrs Jessie Rowell, Miss Mary Sylvia Calmady-Hamlyn and Miss Rosalie Caroline Chichester.⁵⁶ It is apparent that these local notables were intent to act upon commanding the confidence of Devon's population in arbitrating the system of conscription in the county. This was evident in the review of the first session of the Exeter Panel of the DAT on 17 March 1916. The correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* proposed that 'it was felt that the gentlemen who had previously heard the evidence of the applicants had taken a fair view of the surrounding circumstances and meted out justice to those who appeared before them'.⁵⁷ In fact, the correspondent placed an emphasis upon the abilities of one particular gentleman on the tribunal because he suggested that Heathcoat-Amory who presided over the first session 'proved himself [to be] an able chairman'.⁵⁸ This first session led the columnist to deduce that all 'appeals which come before the Panel will certainly receive a sympathetic and impartial hearing, but it is patent that sacrifices will have to be made by employers and employed'.⁵⁹

Yet, it is clear through the hearings of Devon's local and Appeal Tribunals in that occurred during 1916 that the county's elite used these tribunals as a platform to further extend their campaigns of superintendence. Upon the review of an individual's appeal for exemption, the members of tribunals across Devon could also make exhortations and judgements about the character of this individual's patriotism. For instance, during a session of the tribunal of the East Devon village of Culmstock on 23 February 1916, the tribunal members adjudicated upon the case of a local baker's son. According to the coverage of the *Western Times*, the baker was given two weeks to find a replacement for

⁵⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 4 March 1916, p. 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, *The London Gazette*, 3 March 1916, p. 2344.

⁵⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 18 March 1916, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

his son to which the baker replied that his son was quite ready to do his duty.⁶⁰ In response to this statement, the Tribunal remarked that this ‘was a very patriotic attitude’ to take.⁶¹ Another example of this was the hearing that took place on 6 May 1916 at the Teignmouth Tribunal where the Military had made applications for four men to be unstarred. Out of these four applications, only one appealed against the draft. The members of the Tribunal proposed that considering the fact that the three men had agreed to be conscripted it had revealed the patriotic spirit of the men.⁶² Hence, it can be ventured that these examples of ‘patriotic’ responses from Devon’s Tribunals worked in a similar manner to ‘patriotic’ families. These were families who were praised by members of Devon’s elite and publicised in the local press as ‘patriotic’ examples due to the fact that they had more than one son who had more than one son that had enlisted.⁶³ These patriotic examples were intended not only to educate individuals to aspire to these standards of patriotism but also to shame unpatriotic families whose son or sons had not volunteered.⁶⁴ Similarly, the publication of ‘patriotic’ examples from Devon’s Tribunals in the local press was intended not only to inform Devon’s men-folk of the expectation of how they should respond to the verdict of the tribunal but also to shame ‘unpatriotic’ individuals.

The same is also true of examples of what was considered to be, in the view of the ‘provincial patriots’, to be ‘unpatriotic’ behaviour. This was especially apparent during the Exeter Panel of the DAT on 9 June 1916 with the case of Clement A. W. Carveth. The Military had appealed against the decision of the Okehampton Tribunal to grant Carveth exemption for six months. Carveth’s employer, Mr Blatchford stated in his defence that out of the 44 men at his furnishers and building merchants he had ‘only

⁶⁰ *Western Times*, 24 February 1916, p. 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid*

⁶² *Western Times*, 9 May 1916, p. 3.

⁶³ Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 89.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

appealed for this man'.⁶⁵ Blatchford claimed that he was unfairly targeted by the military because there were other local businesses in the mid-Devon town that had 'kept their apprentices and had come before the tribunal and scored'.⁶⁶ In fact, Blatchford attempted to reaffirm the sincerity of his small request when he proclaimed that he did support equality of sacrifice and he had 'only asked for this man for the summer out of the whole of the staff [of his business]'.⁶⁷ In response to his defence, Heathcoat-Amory who chaired this session of the DAT stated that whilst the tribunal members regretted that there were 'many young men left in unnecessary occupations' in Okehampton, they were not prepared to overrule the Military's appeal against Carveth's exemption.⁶⁸ As a direct result of the tribunal's verdict, the correspondent for the *Western Times* observed that Blatchford was angry at the verdict because he intimated that in the future he would not offer his apprentices to the Army.⁶⁹ After hearing this, Heathcoat-Amory replied to Blatchford that 'I am sorry your patriotism is so thin'.⁷⁰ This statement from Heathcoat-Amory reveals how tribunal members could use the behaviour of the applicants or their employers to make pronouncements about the character of the patriotism that they exhibited during the hearing.

Yet, the statements made by both Blatchford and Heathcoat-Amory present important points concerning the relationship between a tribunal member and the employer attempting to gain exemption for his employee. Firstly, Blatchford's resentment towards the verdict of the tribunal seemed to reflect that there was a dichotomy between his priority to keep Carveth to help ensure the individual survival of his business and the priorities of Heathcoat-Amory as the DAT's Chairman. The lack of consideration from

⁶⁵ *Western Times*, 10 June 1916, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Heathcoat-Amory towards Carveth's sincerity also reinforces McDermott's suggestion that tribunalists were viewed with a degree of 'otherness' which 'in relation to their wider communities emphasized the underlying anomaly of their role'.⁷¹ Decisions such as the uncompassionate response of the appeal panel towards an individual application for exemption or a businessman's attempt to gain exemption for his workforce helped to imbue some of the tribunal panels with a quality of 'otherness' which 'emphasized the underlying ambiguity of the tribunalists' role and how it was perceived [on a local level].'⁷² In the context of the campaigns of superintendence, it is clear that the 'provincial patriots' who were members of tribunals came to judgements which were not necessarily popular or well understood with various Devonians. Similarly, Paul Rusiecki observes that in Essex there were similar attitudes towards tribunals in that although 'many who came before tribunals were viewed with suspicion by tribunal members and by society in general, tribunals were not always seen as the dispensers of local injustice against unpatriotic shirkers'.⁷³ Comparable dishevelled responses came from other employers in Devon who objected to the verdicts of Tribunals, as they felt threatened that the future of their business would suffer after the failure of the appeal of their employee. This also indicated the frustration that some Devonians felt towards the system of conscription. In addition, some Devonians resented the intervention of not only the Military in overruling the decision of the local tribunals but also the interference and judgement of the 'provincial patriots'. Thus, some members of Devon's elite through their elevated judicial status on the tribunals were perceived to possess this quality of 'otherness'.

⁷¹ McDermott, 'The Work of the Military Service Tribunals in Northamptonshire, 1916-1918', p.176

⁷² McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918*, pp. 156-157.

⁷³ Paul Rusiecki, *The Impact of Catastrophe: The people of Essex and the First World War (1914-1918)* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 2008) pp. 103-104.

Nevertheless, Heathcoat-Amory's response also shows how the 'provincial patriots' viewed their semi-judicial responsibilities on the tribunal panels as they sought to determine and oversee the nature of what could or could not be constituted as patriotic behaviour. A similar value-judgment of the patriotism of Devon's population was echoed in the appeal of Preston Pugsley during the session of the Northern Panel of the DAT on 12 July 1916. The military had appealed against the decision of the tribunal at the North Devon village of Shirwell to grant Pugsley a final exemption for Preston until 1 September 1916. Pugsley was a cattleman working for his father who was unattested. His father had gained a final extension on the period of his son's exemption. Hitherto, Preston's father was very concerned with the fact that the result for his son was final, so he declared that if this verdict was final then he would have little choice but to start 'to sell up my stock'.⁷⁴ This prompted Lieutenant Stirling, the tribunal's military representative, to declare that the Pugsleys did not 'seem to care a hang about the war'.⁷⁵ Instead, it seemed to Stirling that the Pugsleys seemed to care about 'only their stock'.⁷⁶ This led Stirling to claim that there 'doesn't seem to be a pennyworth of patriotism going'.⁷⁷ Stirling's accusation prompted the correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* to produce the sensational headline that there was a lack of patriotism 'alleged against appellants in North Devon'.⁷⁸ However, it must be observed that the Pugsleys' attempt to place the survival of the farm over the interests of the nation through the war years emphasizes how the 'provincial patriots' constituted this to be a dereliction of duty. This incident additionally underscores the challenging nature of the continued struggle that Devon's elite faced to instil the necessity of conscription as a measure intended to ensure the survival of the nation into the minds of Devonians.

⁷⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 July 1916, p. 5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

It could be argued the tribunals were more than solely the adjudication of manpower since these incidents were examples to inform and educate Devonians as to the expectations of what was, in the eyes of the ‘provincial patriots’, patriotic or not patriotic behaviour. Nicoletta F. Gullace’s observed that in a nation obsessed with the fear of spies and the enemy within, to volunteer to serve was ‘a symbolic act that could mark the will of the inner man’.⁷⁹ This meant that, in the view of the ‘provincial patriots’, a man presented his patriotism through the act of enlistment. However, unlike volunteering, the conscription of a man could not act as a ‘mark of inner conversion, signifying the loyal sentiments of those who had joined and assuring observers that external actions were accompanied by inner transformation’.⁸⁰ This was in spite of the exhortations from members of Devon’s tribunals that the county’s men-folk must accept the tribunal’s verdict as their conscription was in the national interest. Under the system of conscription, the patriotism of Devon’s men was not always self-evident when they presented appeals against military service before MST panels, due to the fact that masculinity was ‘still caught up if not always in the overt emblems of military service’.⁸¹ In light of this definition of patriotism as being an obligation to defend the nation, one group whose patriotism was in question was the male Conscientious Objector (CO).

Susan R. Grayzel suggests that male war-resisters were perceived in the minds of contemporaries to be subversive of gender due to their objection to military service, which was defined as the traditional responsibility of male citizens.⁸² Through the system of tribunals, CO’s could appeal against their conscription. An example of this

⁷⁹ Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”, p. 105, David French, ‘Spy Fever in Britain, 1900-1915’, *The Historical Journal* Vol. 12, 2 (Jun 1978) pp. 355-370.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁸¹ Susan R. Grayzel, ‘Women and Men’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 274.

⁸² *Ibid.*

was the appeal from Arthur Short Portbury a jobbing twenty-nine year old builder who appealed against conscription because he was a CO. The local tribunal had dismissed Portbury's appeal for exemption on the grounds that he did not belong to a religious body and they considered his objection was based upon 'reasons of cowardice than conscience'.⁸³ However, Portbury was prepared to offer a compromise in which he would undertake 'any work of national importance so long [as] it had nothing to do with the military machine'.⁸⁴ Before the members of the Exeter Panel of the DAT on 31 March 1916, Portbury protested against the decision of the local tribunal to dismiss his application because he believed that all war was wrong, he was a Christian and he objected to the taking of human life. In response to Portbury's declaration, Kekewich enquired whether the applicant ate bread to which Portbury replied that he did.⁸⁵ Kekewich further asked whether Portbury was 'aware that bread is a mass of life? And you eat cheese?'⁸⁶ The applicant replied in the positive. Kekewich clarified that Portbury did take life when he ate because 'Cheese is full of life. When you eat cheese you bite the maggots (laughter)'.⁸⁷ Through a series of detailed questions, it can be ventured that Kekewich conducted an interrogation to test the integrity of Portbury's pacifist principles. In fact, this was evident when he emphasized that the very air that Portbury was breathing was 'full of animal life'.⁸⁸ Portbury replied that 'we are all here to get the facts and not to go off into fancies'.⁸⁹ The presiding Chairman, Heathcoat-Amory stated that it was no fancy at all and he had to 'satisfy the Tribunal that he really did and always held a conscientious objection to war of all kinds, and to taking any part in it'.⁹⁰ In his defence, Portbury suggested that his 'past life was the only evidence he

⁸³ *Western Times*, 1 April 1916, p. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

could offer' to prove the validity of his conscientious objection.⁹¹ Captain Vosper, the panel's military representative, pointed out that despite the fact Portbury had an objection to killing, he was willing to 'eat something that someone else kills for you?'.⁹² Portbury answered that he certainly would. Therefore, it could be observed that through these questions the members of the Tribunal emphasized Portbury's selfish attitude towards any sense of obligation towards the war effort and Portbury had undermined the sincerity of his principles of conscientious objection. Eventually, Heathcoat-Amory decided that Portbury's appeal for exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection had not satisfied the Exeter panel of the DAT 'anymore than the local tribunal'.⁹³ Consequently, they upheld the verdict of the local Tribunal in that Portbury needed to serve in the armed forces. In a note of final defiance, Portbury uttered, 'I shall not do that. I would rather face prosecution'.⁹⁴ Through a critical review of his appeal at the DAT and the publicity of his conduct in the local press, it could be argued that the 'provincial patriots' had brought him to justice, to account for his conscientious objection. Due to Portbury's inconsistent answers to the tribunal panel questions, he was seen to be a shirker rather than a true pacifist. It could be argued that the humiliation of the supposed patriotism of CO's was part of Devon's elite wider campaigns of superintendence of not only the patriotism of Devon's men-folk but also the social morality of wartime. Indeed, due to the dramatic nature of this session of the DAT, it was reported in a verbatim manner in the local press. McDermott points out that the local newspapers 'naturally sought out the atypical or remarkable story' in their coverage of Tribunals.⁹⁵ The fact that the proceedings of this particular hearing of the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918*, p. 2.

DAT were published in the local and international press also added to the sensation of Portbury's appeal.⁹⁶

Alongside their attempts to superintend the patriotism of Devon's men, it is also apparent that the 'provincial patriots', as self-appointed arbiters of the social morality of wartime, attempted to administer upon the wartime behaviour of the county's population. On 18 August 1916, the Northern Panel of the DAT adjudicated upon the military's appeal against the temporary exemption of motor char-a-banc driver Albert Jas Baddick.⁹⁷ The reason that the Ilfracombe Tribunal had granted exemption to Baddick was to give his employer Wm. Hy Robins the benefit of Baddick's employment during a full holiday season. It is important to reflect that the Ilfracombe Tribunal who had granted exemption to Baddick were IUDC Councillors who were sympathetic to motor char-a-banc drivers who helped to support the town's holiday industry.⁹⁸ Hence, the decisions made by local tribunals often reflected the social and economic composition of the localities in which they adjudicated over.⁹⁹

Through the summer of 1916, the Devon resorts of 'Seaton, Paignton, Lynmouth and Sidmouth were crowded as a result of the virtual closure of the east coast resorts'.¹⁰⁰ However, Ilfracombe's holiday industry in 1915 had experienced great hardship compared to the South Devon resorts. IUDC Councillor Mr G. H. Batten proposed on 10 April 1916 that 'no place had suffered like Ilfracombe in the matter of fast trains

⁹⁶ *The Northwest Worker*, 18 May 1916, p. 1, *The Maoriland Worker*, Vol. 7, 280, 28 June 1916, p. 1.,

⁹⁷ *Western Times*, 18 August 1916, p. 3.

⁹⁸ *North Devon Journal*, 17 August 1916

⁹⁹ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918*, pp. 64-130, Gregory, 'Military Service Tribunals', pp. 181, 190.

¹⁰⁰ Nigel John Morgan, 'Perceptions, Patterns and Policies of Tourism: The development of the Devon seaside resorts during the Twentieth Century with special reference to Torquay and Ilfracombe', University of Exeter, PhD thesis, 1991, p. 158.

being discontinued, and they also had steamers running now'.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Ilfracombe's Tribunal panel understood that Ilfracombe's tourism industry had to make the most out of whatever fortunes the 1916 holiday season would bring. This helps to confirm McDermott's point that the Government was often frustrated by local tribunalists because with their 'idiosyncratic interpretations of legislation and instructions, they personified the inertial drag of local priorities'.¹⁰² Lieutenant Stirling, the military representative, remarked in a dismayed tone that 'he rarely, if ever, had come across a more disgraceful case'.¹⁰³ Stirling continued that whilst he 'did not like saying things about tribunals', he felt that the Ilfracombe Tribunal had 'rather overstepped it in this case'.¹⁰⁴ The acting chairman of the Northern Panel, H. N. G. Stucley enquired if this man was 'driving round people enjoying themselves'.¹⁰⁵ Mr Robins avoided elaborating on the arguably frivolous nature of Baddick's occupation but instead stressed that Baddick drove a char-a-banc which was 'exactly the same as other people'.¹⁰⁶

Stucley was horrified at the fact that Baddick had received exemption from the Ilfracombe Tribunal. Therefore, the unanimous view of the Northern Panel was that Baddick would join up immediately. Whilst he delivered the verdict, Stucley also made an important point about Baddick's occupation in that he believed it was a 'great pity that at a time when we have so many strongly worded protests appearing in the Press and official warnings against private motor-car owners using their cars more than necessary, these big cars [are] burning a large amount of petrol – supposed to be so

¹⁰¹ *Western Times*, 12 April 1916, p. 3.

¹⁰² McDermott, 'The Work of the Military Service Tribunals in Northamptonshire, 1916-1918', p. 176.

¹⁰³ *Western Times*, 18 August 1916, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

scarce at the present time'.¹⁰⁷ This was endorsed when it was announced in the *London Gazette* on 25 August 1916 that petrol regulations would come into force on 1 September 1916 that would prohibit petrol for char-a-banc cars.¹⁰⁸ After hearing this news, Ilfracombe char-a-banc excursion proprietors complained against the measure which they claimed would devastate their livelihoods.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it is clear that these char-a-banc drivers were the subject of criticism not only because of their perceived frivolous occupation but also because their vehicles burned a large amount of petrol, which was supposed to be a scarce commodity. It was agreed by the Northern Panel that Baddick should not be 'allowed to run simply for the purposes of giving joy rides to other people'.¹¹⁰ In light of the social morality of wartime, this was deemed to be wholly unacceptable and the Military's appeal against Baddick's exemption was upheld by the Northern Panel.¹¹¹

Nonetheless, it can be observed that the exemption of a man employed in the holiday industry went against the grain of the accepted norms of the social morality of wartime. During 1916, the British government intensified their efforts to campaign against leisure activities, with an advertising campaign promoting the message that people should reconsider their intention of taking a holiday during wartime. To add credibility to their appeals, the government gained the endorsement of General Sir Douglas Haig. On a poster entitled 'Postpone Your Holidays', Haig appealed: 'Let the whole British Nation forego any idea of a general holiday until our goal is reached. A speedy and decisive victory will then be ours'.¹¹² By suggesting that they should reconsider their priorities, the poster promoted the idea that their contributions could make the difference between

¹⁰⁷ *Western Times*, 18 August 1916, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ *North Devon Journal*, 31 August 1916, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Western Times*, 18 August 1916, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² The National Archives: EXT 1/315/10, 2 Posters, 1916, item 1.

victory and defeat. This poster campaign was an appeal not only to munitions workers but also to the British population. Similarly, by using Haig, the high ranking and popular general, to act as a political spokesman for the policies of Britain's wartime government, the campaign helped to further militarise the Home Front and emphasize the behaviour deemed to be both virtuous and acceptable in the social morality of wartime.¹¹³ It is clear that conscription and the significance of civilian war energy as a resource helped to further damage the holiday industry in 1916.

With the introduction of this network of tribunals in Devon, it became apparent that the relationship between the decision-makers in the tribunals in the specific localities of Devon and the DAT was fraught with difficulty. The exemption of Baddick by the Ilfracombe Tribunal and the evidence from Devon's local and Appeal Tribunals confirm McDermott's suggestion that the tribunal system of the MSA produced great 'inconsistencies from region to region and hindered a coordinated approach to manpower'.¹¹⁴ This was noted in the appeal of an unnamed tailor during a hearing of the Exeter Panel of the DAT on 10 June 1916. The applicant revealed that his brother was a cutter and had received exemption at the South Molton Tribunal.¹¹⁵ The correspondent of the *Western Times* who witnessed this appeal noticed that Heathcoat-Amory was surprised to hear this and asked the applicant whether he meant that the South Molton Tribunal 'gave exemption to a cutter in these times?'.¹¹⁶ Lieutenant Stirling, the military representative on the panel, replied to Heathcoat-Amory that they 'give everybody exemption at Southmolton (sic)'.¹¹⁷ Subsequently, there were other cases that emphasized the inconsistent manner among the network of MST's across Devon in how

¹¹³ Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1959) p. 237.

¹¹⁴ Gerard J. DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1996) p. 96.

¹¹⁵ *Western Times*, 1 August 1916, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

they approached the arbitration of appeals for exemption. This was revealed in the appeal from L. A. Sayer, a licenced victualler from Tiverton who appealed against the ‘no exemption’ decision of the local tribunal. However, Heathcoat-Amory suggested that Sayer’s family, in particular his sister, could continue the business in his stead.¹¹⁸ After Heathcoat-Amory suggested this solution to the licenced victualler’s dilemma, Sayer alleged that favouritism was present at the Tiverton Tribunal because ‘certain others get exemption at Tiverton’.¹¹⁹ It is interesting that when prompted by Heathcoat-Amory’s prescription, Sayer decided to vocalize the suggestion that there seemed to be favouritism present at the Tiverton Tribunal. This reveals Sayer’s grievances against the interference of Devon’s elite upon his business affairs and the perceived unequal implementation of conscription.

Nevertheless, there may be some validity in Sayer’s allegation because the military representative for the Tiverton Tribunal, Colonel Couchman, admitted on 18 July 1916 that ‘he must in future press hard for every man’.¹²⁰ Couchman maintained that the members of the Tiverton Tribunal ‘must harden their hearts’ when they considered the appeals from the local farmers because there was now a greater ‘need for men than ever before’.¹²¹ Another reason why Couchman stressed that Tiverton Tribunal members should take a more impartial approach to farmers appeals for exemption was because agriculture would ‘be of no use if the Germans got the upper hand’.¹²² In addition, there was the observation that rural tribunals were not subjected to the same accountability as urban ones because there was a perceived ‘civilizational distinction’ between the behaviour of individuals in close-knit urban localities and those in sparsely populated

¹¹⁸ *Western Times*, 10 June 1916, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Western Times*, 21 July 1916, p. 3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

and far flung rural ones.¹²³ Gregory suggests that there was a widespread urban suspicion that rural tribunals were ‘engaged in mutual back-scratching and corrupt deals over a glass of something’.¹²⁴

Consequently, it was this sovereignty over the exemption process at a local level which helped make the MSTs unpopular and viewed with apprehension. Nonetheless, it is important to consider that rural tribunals faced two equally strong and contradictory pressures during the later part of 1916.¹²⁵ The BAF emphasized to the tribunals in rural localities that when considering the appeals of agriculturalists, domestic food production needed to be maintained or increased. At the same time, they received equally persistent demands from the WO to release more men for their industry which utilised a high proportion of the nation’s fittest manpower.¹²⁶ This placed rural tribunals in a difficult position. Furthermore, this heightened the idiosyncratic nature of decision-making by the local tribunals within a county. Some tribunals which covered rural areas were more compassionate towards the role of the ‘farmer in their communities, consistently applied their own understanding of the balance between these imperatives to the disadvantage of the recruitment officer’.¹²⁷ The decisions made by the Calne tribunal in Wiltshire revealed that they tended ‘to be somewhat more generous towards agriculture than those employed in other areas’.¹²⁸ At the same time, there were other rural tribunals that were more conscious of the urgent requirement for men in the armed forces. Indeed, the local perceptions that farmers’ sons were avoiding military service could have been an important factor in the deliberation process of tribunal panels in the dilution of the male agricultural labour force in order to counter the

¹²³ *The Times*, 27 October 1916, p. 9.

¹²⁴ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 122.

¹²⁵ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, pp. 124-126.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

negative perception. Accordingly, members of some tribunals ‘showed little discernible sympathy for the unique circumstances of agricultural life until the impact of over-dilution in their localities became marked’.¹²⁹

For this reason, McDermott suggests that in terms of tribunals there was certainly a ‘contemporary public perception that the playing field was not level’.¹³⁰ This is certainly true of Devon as the criticism of the decisions made by tribunals was not isolated to rural Tribunals because there were similar allegations were levelled at other tribunal bodies in the county. On 14 September 1916 the Mayor of Barnstaple, F. A. Jewell, spoke to the citizens of Barnstaple to reaffirm their confidence in and defend the actions of the North Devon town’s Tribunal.¹³¹ Jewell revealed to the audience that the Tribunal had ‘been looked upon as rather a harsh body, but he believed Col. Alexander would say it had done its duty as far as possible’.¹³² There was also criticism in the local press of the appeals that were granted by the Plymouth panel of the DAT because ‘many cases of far greater individual hardship have been turned down by Appeal Tribunals’.¹³³ One extreme example of vocalised criticism against the perceived unfairness of the DAT was evident on 18 August 1916. During the Exeter panel of the DAT, Mr Bond, a collector for an Insurance company, appeared to defend two individuals whose exemption by the Newton Abbot tribunal was appealed against by the Military. After heated passages between the respective parties, both appeals by the Military were upheld by the DAT. Bond responded with the accusation that Lieutenant Stirling was a bully and declared in a defiant tone that ‘I think it is nothing but bias; it is arranged

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ McDermott, ‘The Work of the Military Service Tribunals in Northamptonshire, 1916-1918’, p. 177.

¹³¹ Imperial War Museum: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Times*, 15 September 1916.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Times*, 29 August 1916.

before-hand'.¹³⁴ Kekewich warned him that he would be prosecuted if he was not careful and admitted that to be incarcerated was probably what Bond wanted. Lieutenant Stirling said that for Bond to 'say that these matters are arranged is a reflection of the whole system, and he ought to be ashamed of himself'.¹³⁵ A correspondent of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, who witnessed the spectacle, was sympathetic to the DAT members because he argued that they had to undertake 'sufficiently arduous work without being insulted by men of the Bond type'.¹³⁶ Consequently, the very fact that the tribunal system could not be centralized, contributed to fuel the criticism that was directed against the Tribunal system in Devon and helped to create an idiosyncratic system.

At the same time as the MST's administered over these applications for exemption, the Navy and the Royal Marines continued to appeal for volunteers from Devon. On 4 January 1916, the Admiralty recruiting office in Exeter published a statement which declared to the residents of the city that there was 'still opportunity for men to signify their willingness to enter the Navy or Royal Marines, and defer their actual service, to take advantage of the naval group system'.¹³⁷ During 1916, the local press in Devon continued to publish these appeals from the Navy for men. An example of this was an article published in the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* on 19 June 1916 which emphasized that Devon's men could choose to volunteer into the Navy or Royal Marines rather than be conscripted because the 'naval system of recruiting was still open'.¹³⁸ In fact, volunteering into the Navy was viewed by some Devonians as an alternative to conscription. This was evident in the application of Ralph Robinson Willott who had

¹³⁴ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Times*, 19 August 1916.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 19 August 1916.

¹³⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 5 January 1916, p. 3.

¹³⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 19 June 1916, p. 3.

appealed against compulsion on the grounds that he was a CO. However, on 18 April 1916 he informed the Newton Abbot Tribunal that he had decided to withdraw his application because ‘he had offered himself to the Navy’.¹³⁹ Similarly, another instance of how some Devonians attempted to avoid the system of conscription was revealed during the appeal of James Quance. According to the correspondent for the *Western Times*, Quance was a nineteen year old indentured apprentice to Messrs. J. Glass and Son, Agricultural Engineers based in Okehampton. The military had appealed against Okehampton Tribunal’s decision to grant exemption to Quance on the basis that he was solely engaged in work connected with agricultural machinery. Upon his review of his appeal in Exeter during the session of Central Panel of the DAT on 16 December 1916, Mr Glass Senior spoke in Quance’s defence arguing that Quance was ‘learning engineering fitting and turning [in his business], with a view to his entering the Navy’.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Mr Glass revealed during this session of the DAT that he had ‘already trained 25 men in this way for the Navy and they all passed’.¹⁴¹ It could be observed that Glass’s testimony reveals that there were some employers in Devon who used the Navy system of recruitment as some businesses wanted to avoid any unwarranted criticism by the members of the DAT towards their business practices and the subsequent publicity of the hearing.

Yet, the individuals who were primarily targeted to join the Navy were Devon’s fishermen. Under the conditions of the MSA of 1916, fishermen were exempt from conscription since the Admiralty had ‘exercised their right under the Military Service Act to have first call on the service of fishermen’.¹⁴² Accordingly, the WO carried out

¹³⁹ *Western Times*, 18 April 1916, p. 3

¹⁴⁰ *Western Times*, 16 December 1916, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 82, 28 March 1916, Column 539.

the wishes of Admiralty.¹⁴³ Fishermen were regarded as particularly useful for the Navy due to their maritime experience.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, the fact that fishermen contributed to Britain's food supplies reinforced the validity of their claim for exemption from conscription. This meant that they would not be 'called up for service unless and until they are actually required for Naval Service'.¹⁴⁵ The BAF advised that unattested fishermen of military age should apply for a 'Fisherman's Conditional Certificate of Exemption from Military Service' which would confirm their contribution to the food supply.¹⁴⁶ The fishermen who provided evidence that they are bona-fide fishermen were presented with the opportunity to offer themselves for immediate service in the Royal Naval Reserve (Trawler Section) or the Y Section of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR).¹⁴⁷ For the fishermen who joined the RNVR, they could continue to fish during 1916 until they were needed to serve.¹⁴⁸ However, the significance of the fishing industry as a certified occupation along with the arrangement made with the Admiralty for first refusal on the fishermen was contested by the escalating demands of the Army.

This was apparent in a letter written by Stephen Reynolds, the ISWF, on 27 September 1916 to H. G. Maurice, the fisheries' secretary at the BAF. In this letter, Reynolds explained to Maurice that he had been severely shocked upon hearing that in London the WO had apparently concluded an arrangement 'under which the fishermen who have the Naval Rejection Form, Y. 9, will lapse to the Army; or at all events those fit

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 31 March 1916, p. 6

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Devon Heritage Centre: R4582Aadd2/BZ/2, Minute book of the Brixham Tribunal, 1915-1916, 28 February 1916, p. 15.

¹⁴⁷ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 31 March 1916, p. 6

¹⁴⁸ Neil Ashcroft, 'The Diminishing Commons: Politics, War and Territorial Waters in the Twentieth Century', in D. J. Starkey ed., *England's Sea Fisheries: The Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300* (London: Chatham Publishing, 2000) p. 220.

for General Service'.¹⁴⁹ It was evident that the expiration of the Y. 9 Scheme would be disastrous for Devon's fishermen because the explicit condition of this scheme was that it allowed the county's fisherman to continue to fish. According to Reynolds, this new arrangement would 'seriously deplete [fishing] crews already short-handed and hard to find, but what is far worse is that the fishermen will certainly regard it as a breach of faith'.¹⁵⁰ Reynolds believed that it was not good enough for the WO to argue that the Y. 9 scheme should lapse if fishermen were taken out of the Certified Occupations List.¹⁵¹ This meant that scores of Devon's fishermen turned to Reynolds for his advice on what they should do in light of conscription. To Devon's fishermen, he answered that he could not 'make your mind up for you; but if you want to make yourself safe for Naval Service, if any, go for the R.N.V.R. (Y.), and if rejected, you'll get Y.9'.¹⁵² As a result of these encounters, Reynolds revealed to Maurice that a lot of fishermen had taken on board his advice.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Reynolds felt betrayed that the WO had decided without any consultation with him, that the Y. 9 scheme should expire and that fishing would not be recognised as a certified occupation. This lack of consideration and sense of indifference towards the position of Devon's fishermen was evident when Reynolds declared in a tone of anger with a rhetorical question: 'What are people on the coast, with feelings, prejudices if you like, and memories, are only names and figures in London'.¹⁵³ He stressed that the both Devon's and Cornwall's fishermen would 'bitterly resent being dropped overboard into the Army - and for little enough gain to the

¹⁴⁹ Stephen Reynolds, *The Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. by Harold Wright (Richmond: Hogarth press, 1923) p. 219.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

Army'.¹⁵⁴ Reynolds believed that this reversal of policy towards the recruitment of fishermen would mean he would lose the trust he had built with Devon's and Cornwall's fishermen. He confessed that he could not think of any 'arrangement so disastrous to the growing confidence between us and the fishermen ought to be fixed up in your absence'.¹⁵⁵ In fact, in a letter to Maurice dated 8 October 1916, Reynolds provides a hint to Maurice's reaction towards the scrapping of the Y. 9 Scheme for fishermen because Maurice was apparently 'on the warpath over the fishermen and the Y. 9's'.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Reynolds presented a sense of conviction in his letter of 27 September, in that his work with the fishing industry was at a critical point. Indeed, he suggested that 'for a gain to the Army not balanced by diminished food, our relations with the fishermen will receive the severest set-back'.¹⁵⁷ It is clear that Reynolds was furious at the lack of consideration for the position of Devon's fishermen when the decision was made to remove the Y. 9 along with removing the fishing industry from the list of certified occupations.

This lack of compassion towards the position of Devon's fishermen was also evident during the proceedings of Brixham's Tribunal on 13 October 1916 under the chairmanship of the local vicar, Reverend Steward Sim. The coverage of the hearing in the *Western Times* revealed that the recruiting officer for the tribunal, Captain Gorley, opposed each of the claims for exemption from all twelve apprentices of fishing industry because he did not regard any of the apprentices as indispensable 'in view of the urgent demand for men'.¹⁵⁸ It was decided that the apprentices would not be called up until 1 November 1916. Yet, all of the apprentices for the fishing industry wished to be classed as fishermen since, as far as the Army was concerned, they would be granted

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Western Times*, 17 October 1916, p. 6.

conditional exemption.¹⁵⁹ Reverend Sim considered that the Brixham Tribunal should act ‘under the agreement with the Admiralty as regards the fishermen until November 1st when the certified occupation for the men would be withdrawn in accordance of the notice [that was] issued’.¹⁶⁰ He went on to suggest that the tribunal panel were bound by the Admiralty agreement to which they could either defer their appeals until 1 November or grant them conditional exemption.¹⁶¹ However, Gorley insisted that it was urgent that the appeals of the apprentices should not be adjourned for more than a week since some of them were away fishing.¹⁶² Eventually, the tribunal decided to adjourn the appeal until 1 November and that the appellants who were unfit must ‘join one of the Admiralty sections if they could not be taken by the Army’.¹⁶³

Yet, this particular hearing of the Brixham Tribunal had created anxieties amongst the management of the Brixham Fishing Smack Insurance Company. The Company’s President, Mr S. R. L. Johnson was concerned about what would happen to the fishing apprentices since the MSA did not apply to the Navy. In fact, he was concerned to such an extent that he had written to Sir John Towse, the National Fisheries Protection Association to inform him of the facts of the case and ask for his assistance in the matter. Nevertheless, as Reverend Sim clarified to the members of tribunal on 1 November, the fishing industry would no longer be a certified occupation. However, when Brixham’s Tribunal reconvened to discuss the matter on 3 November 1916, the BAF intervened in the case of the fishing apprentices. On 25 October, the Assistant Secretary of the BAF, Mr A. W. Anstruther, wrote to Brixham’s Tribunal to say that they regarded an apprentice of the Sea Fishing Service as a ‘fisherman within the

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

application of the Military Service Acts and the regulations made there under'.¹⁶⁴ Anstruther recommended that if an apprentice was of military age, unless he wished to join the Army, he could either enrol in a Naval unit or 'apply to a Tribunal for a certificate of exemption' under the Regulations for Tribunals Section IV paragraph 1.¹⁶⁵ If an apprentice were to enrol in the Y Section of the RNVR, he could still continue to fish 'until such time as he may be called up for service, which would only be with the concurrence of this department'.¹⁶⁶ Anstruther advised that it was open to an apprentice to apply for exemption on the grounds that it was 'expedient in the national interests that he should continue to be educated and trained in the Sea Fishing Service rather than he should be employed in the Naval or Military Service'.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, if an apprentice was to enrol in the Y section of the RNVR it would be afforded to him 'similar protection so far as it can be afforded without prejudicing the supply of men for the Navy'.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, after the intervention of the BAF, the fishing apprentices had the opportunity to decide whether to enlist in the Navy or to enrol in the Y section of the RNVR.

For the men who received a certificate of temporary exemption at the Brixham Tribunal in 1916, the members of the tribunal attached the condition that successful appellants had to 'attest and attend [military] drill with the [Brixham] Volunteer Training Corps commanded by Dr Patton'.¹⁶⁹ According to Samantha Little, exemption from the Brixham Tribunal could also require the exempt man to become a member of the Men's VAD.¹⁷⁰ It was hoped that through service in either the Men's VAD or the Voluntary

¹⁶⁴ *Western Times*, 6 November 1916, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Samantha Little, *Through Cloud and Sunshine: Brixham in the Great War* (Brixham: Brixham Museum, 2008) p. 14

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Training Corps (VTC) it would become evident to individuals who were granted exemption that it did not provide a licence for themselves to excuse any participation in the war effort. The VTC was a paramilitary defence force comprised of volunteers who were usually outside the requirements of military service.¹⁷¹ The advent of conscription according to McDermott brought a new rationale to the VTC, beyond being a local volunteer force for the protection of specific localities. Indeed, for the men who were granted exemption, the corps provided them with military training which usefully reduced the time and resources that were required to ‘get a civilian to where he might best assist the war effort’.¹⁷² Yet, the evidence from Brixham’s Tribunal reveals that some exempted individuals did not adhere to this condition of their exemption. This was evident in the number of truants from Brixham’s VTC and the individuals who continued to be absent from the drills. An instance of this was on 3 November 1916, when the Tribunal Committee received a letter from the Secretary of Brixham’s VTC which revealed that J. Lawe and H. Tulley had not attended any drills of Brixham’s VTC. On the motion of this letter, the clerk of tribunal was instructed to write to Lawe and Tulley requesting them to attend the tribunal’s next meeting or provide an ‘explanation why they have not attended any drills’.¹⁷³ On 17 November 1916, both Lawe and Tulley attended the meeting of Brixham’s Tribunal and were both instructed to ‘attest and attend the drills as often as possible’.¹⁷⁴ However, on 8 December 1916, Mr Morris reported that Tulley was still absent from Brixham’s VTC drills and marches. The tribunal members then instructed the clerk to write to Tulley to clarify that

¹⁷¹ John Morton Osborne, ‘Defining Their Own Patriotism: British Volunteer Training Corps in the First World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, 1 (January 1988) pp. 59-75, K. W. Mitchinson, *Defending Albion: Britain’s Home Army, 1908-1919* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp. 176-177.

¹⁷² McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, p. 199.

¹⁷³ DHC: R4582Aadd2/BZ/2, Minute book of the Brixham Tribunal, 1915-1916, 3 November 1916, p. 88.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

unless he attested and attended the drill of Brixham's VTC within a week the Tribunal would be 'compelled to withdraw the certificate of conditional exemption'.¹⁷⁵

Similarly, the evidence from Northamptonshire's tribunals that introduced the same prerequisite for those exempted reveals that many men found the commitment excessively difficult to fulfil which caused concern amongst members of tribunals.¹⁷⁶

Conversely, from the perspective of the members of Brixham's Tribunal, the requirement for individuals to participate in Brixham's VTC was a challenging commitment to superintend. Likewise, the members of tribunals in Northamptonshire who imposed this requirement upon exempt individuals 'discovered that they were obliged to police the consequences'.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, it could be ventured that the exempted men who were absent from Brixham's VTC drills and marches had not, in the view of the members of Brixham's Tribunal, fulfilled their obligation to the wartime social contract. In fact, the requirement provided the 'provincial patriots' with a further opportunity to extend their campaign of superintendence of the wartime behaviour and patriotism of those who had received exemption. Hence, the superintendence of the behaviour of exempted individuals was an integral part of not only the policing of the social morality of wartime but also of how Devon's elite attempted to prescribe requests and acceptable behaviours for one section of the local population. This was also evident for other sections of Devon's populace.

Gender and citizenship in the wartime community

The introduction of conscription for men from the ages of eighteen to forty-one in 1916 was a challenge to the gendered division of labour and led to the consideration of

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁷⁶ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, p. 204.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

alternative sources of manpower for some of Britain's industries. The process of substituting male labour with female labour, according to Gullace, was 'facilitated greatly by the advent of conscription'.¹⁷⁸ In fact, Grayzel suggests that the female worker became 'emblematic of the wartime mobilization of women and of the alleged transformation of gender roles and even identities'.¹⁷⁹ The MSA's inauguration gave added impetus and importance to women from Devon's civil society to launch a concerted campaign across the county to exhort and educate the county's population of the necessity of female labour. This was evident in Devon's farming industry as many of the county's farmers were reluctant to resort to employing women on their farms. Instead, some agriculturalists in Devon went to great lengths to keep their sons for labour on their farms. The situation was made apparent during a public meeting convened by Countess Fortescue on 20 January 1916 at South Molton to discuss the subject. She said that the 'want of labour had made itself less felt in North Devon than had been the case in most districts [of the county]'.¹⁸⁰ By 1916, there were already shortages of labour in certain districts of Devon which would undoubtedly increase with the number of men who were to be conscripted. In her speech, the Countess argued that whilst it must be said that the wives of Devon's farmers did work very hard on the land, it was chiefly the unmarried women to whom she wished to 'appeal and also to the farmers who required persons to work on the farm'.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, she emphasized the necessity for the intervention of women in food production because Britain was 'suffering at present from the evil effects of the wait-and-see policy, and that was being brought home to us daily'.¹⁸² Therefore, the Countess insisted that the young women of Devon were the best alternative source of manpower for agriculture which was the main

¹⁷⁸ Gullace, "The Blood of Our Sons", p. 159.

¹⁷⁹ Grayzel, 'Women and Men', p. 267.

¹⁸⁰ *Western Times*, 25 January 1916, p. 3.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

industry of North Devon and hoped that she could change the perception of the county's farmers towards female labour.

Correspondingly, the Mayoress of Totnes, Mrs G. Symons, had organised a meeting to discuss the same objective in the South Devon town on 21 January 1916. In attendance at the meeting was Mrs Mildmay, the President of the Devon Women's War Service Committee (DWWSC), who proposed that the women's war-work movement in the county was vital not only for the war effort but also for Devon's patriotic reputation. However, with a heavy heart she confessed that 'Devon had been left behind' in contrast to other counties in England who 'already had a scheme afoot' to employ women in agriculture.¹⁸³ Mildmay claimed that in Northumberland, fifty six per cent of the county's women were working on the land.¹⁸⁴ For Devon's women there was a 'great prejudice they would [have to] conquer'.¹⁸⁵ One such incident of prejudice was evident in the testimony of Mrs. Easterbrook. She argued that since she undertook agricultural work whilst wearing breeches and leggings, she had been 'blackguarded by the farmers around'.¹⁸⁶

Comparable problems in respect to attitudes of Devon's farmers towards the introduction of inexperienced female labour into agriculture were revealed during a meeting of Women for Service in Agriculture at Barnstaple on 4 February 1916. Miss Sylvia Calmady-Hamlyn who worked for the BAF in Devon broadcasted to the meeting's audience that since the appointment of Lord Selborne's registration scheme, both she and a lady friend had started a register in ninety parishes from Plymouth to Exeter. According to Hamlyn, they had encountered complications to complete a

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Western Times*, 25 January 1916, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

register of women who were willing to work on the land. One such difficulty was to find a lady in each parish who would keep a register.¹⁸⁷ The experience of attempting to complete this register revealed to Hamlyn that ‘although some parts of the county had not borne a very great reputation for patriotism, up to the present the results had exceeded their expectations in a remarkable way’.¹⁸⁸ Notwithstanding these problems, Hamlyn was earnest in her appeal to all classes of Devon’s women and argued that women of leisure and position ‘had no right to ask working women to do their best unless they were prepared to do theirs’.¹⁸⁹ However, hesitation continued to be prevalent amongst Devon’s farmers concerning the capabilities of the county’s women. She noted that two farmers, before they entered the meeting, said they were not going to stay long because ‘it will only be twaddle’.¹⁹⁰ Hamlyn’s statement may refer to the fact that farmers were apprehensive about the contribution that women from Devon’s towns and cities could make to agriculture. This statement could also suggest that some farmers were sceptical about the prescriptions from the speakers at the meeting because they may deem these exhortations to be the interference of ladies of Devon’s elite who were inexperienced or unaccustomed to the farming way of life. Likewise, German farmers proved to be ‘unenthusiastic about taking on city women’ when faced with the exhortations from Germany’s War Office to consider the employment of women from urban areas.¹⁹¹ Instead, women from rural localities with agricultural experience such as peasant women and farm women were called upon to work on Germany’s farm land.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *North Devon Journal*, 10 February 1916, p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Richard Bessel, ‘Mobilization and demobilization in Germany, 1916-1919’ in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 219.

¹⁹² Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007) pp. 156-158, Elizabeth B. Jones, *Gender and Rural Modernity: Farm Women and the Politics of Labor in Germany, 1871-1933* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) pp. 98-110.

It was at this point during the meeting that Hamlyn enthusiastically explained to the women in the hall that it rested upon them to ‘save the fair name of Devonshire women for patriotism’.¹⁹³ She came to this conclusion because a slur had ‘been cast on the patriotism of some parts of Devonshire and Cornwall’.¹⁹⁴ By using this evocation of county patriotism in this appeal, Hamyln attempted to spur the county’s women’s into action in order to restore the prestige of Devon and through their patriotism claim citizenship in the wartime community. She claimed that it was this slur which prompted the women of Cornwall to register their interest and as a result, their register of women was higher than other counties. Subsequently, she hoped that this would prompt the women of Devon who had registered their interest to express their patriotism by undertaking work on the land. To further encourage Devon’s women to commence this form of self-mobilization, Hamyln emphasized a sense of competition between the counties of Devon and Cornwall. It was her aspiration that the results from Devon could, if this were completed, put the county ‘ahead of even of Cornwall’.¹⁹⁵ She believed that instead of accentuating the will to conquer through brutality she advocated that Devon’s women should ‘lead the way to victory and peace through self-sacrifice’.¹⁹⁶ In fact, the county’s women must be ‘willing to do things in which in ordinary times were disagreeable to them’.¹⁹⁷ Accordingly, Devon’s women should recognise the wider significance of war-work whether it was large or small in order to ‘retain the fair fame of their County, and to ensure the victory of their fatherland’.¹⁹⁸

Notwithstanding these exhortations and prescriptions by members of Devon’s elite to alter the perceptions of the gendered division of work, there were women in the county

¹⁹³ *North Devon Journal*, 10 February 1916, p. 7.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

who were sceptical about the success of this campaign. At the same meeting, Mr Fred Horne, a representative of Devon's farmers, claimed that the county's agriculturalists sought to work towards the national interest in that the 'farmer and the labourer alike were expected to sink their differences, and to work for one object – not personal profit but national success'.¹⁹⁹ In addition to upholding the introduction of Devon's women into work on the land, Horne went on to emphasize that the elderly men of the county had their role to play in agriculture. It was undeniable to Horne that the old age pensioner could through working on the land become part of the wartime community. This would mean that the old man could take 'up his task as a patriot and [present that he] was prepared to do all he could'.²⁰⁰ This became apparent to him when considering the number of men who lived in Devon's seaside resorts: 'These men certainly ought to be canvassed and when they were made to understand that there was a job they could do they would find that following the plough was quite as healthy as playing golf'.²⁰¹ It is clear that Horne's statement tapped into the obligations of the social morality of wartime because it was not expected of men to be enjoying frivolous activities. Instead, Horne prescribed that elderly men in wartime should undertake work which would be of benefit to the war effort.

In a letter to the editor of the *North Devon Journal*, Mrs L. Morgan, a resident of the North Devon village of Newbridge, considered that the meetings organised by Countess Fortescue and other notable women of the county constituted an 'agitation to induce the labourer's wife to leave her household duties for work on the land'.²⁰² Despite the fact that the Countess had appealed for young unmarried women to undertake agricultural work, she reckoned that the unemployed girls over school age could not be found in the

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² L. Morgan, 'Women and Work on the Land', *North Devon Journal*, 3 February 1916, p. 6.

homes of labourers across Devon. Instead, they had to conduct their search through visits to ‘houses where domestic servants are kept and appeal to the patriotism of mistress and maids’.²⁰³ Nevertheless, Morgan was sceptical of the success of this search amongst the working and middle class women of Devon. To reinforce her point she argued that for these appeals to rely upon a woman’s patriotism and a wage of three pence per hour to pull turnips and undertake other agricultural activities would not provide a worthwhile inducement to convince cooks and house maids who were earning £20 to £30 per year.²⁰⁴ If the domestic servants in Devon, did exchange their jobs to make such a sacrifice they would be, in Morgan’s view, heroines and would certainly ‘be entitled to a special decoration’.²⁰⁵ The scheme to work on the land Morgan emphasized focused primarily on unmarried women or women of leisure because all the difficulties should be ‘overcome before any mother is asked to leave her home’.²⁰⁶

Morgan put forward an adamant protest against the mere possibility of a mother being asked to leave her home because it would lead to ‘neglected babies, [and] neglected homes [which] mean evil days for the Empire later on’.²⁰⁷ In fact, she hoped that Devon’s mothers possessed enough patriotism to understand that to neglect their families in favour of working on the land would do more harm than good. She went onto sarcastically suggest that: ‘Three pence per hour for efficient women! It is enough to make one blush to look at a cabbage’.²⁰⁸ She added with a further ironic tone that the Countess had achieved what would ‘set an excellent example to women of leisure by offering her services to the farmer. No doubt many will follow her lead. They can well

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

afford to do so'.²⁰⁹ To add further credibility to their appeals, both Earl and Countess Fortescue drew the attention to the 'admirable conduct of the women of France, who are carrying on farm work while their men folk are fighting'.²¹⁰ Margaret Darrow points out that the French peasant women who took to agriculture to produce food for the nation were acclaimed as the 'heroines of the harvest'.²¹¹ This was evident in 1916 when the French novelist René Bazin placed the two figures of the diligent French soldier in the trenches and the resolute peasant woman farming in the fields 'side by side in the patriotic pantheon'.²¹² Nonetheless, Morgan sought to clarify the arguments put forward by the Fortescues in that the 'peasant proprietorship largely obtains in France is probably the explanation of the French woman's greater enthusiasm'.²¹³ Morgan believed that for the women of the upper classes in Devon it would be a 'great pity for any lady to miss this great opportunity (which may never occur again) of showing her patriotism in this way'.²¹⁴ However, various farmers of Devon responded to the sight of a woman undertaking certain agricultural tasks, which were usually completed by a man, with a sense of amazement. Mary Lees, the first member of the Women's Land Army (WLA) in Devon, remembered that when she reversed a horse and cart into a shed, she inadvertently gained an audience. Four old farmers stood to witness how she would cope with reversing the horse and cart into the shed: 'They were simply watching. No one helping, or dreaming of it. Just to see how I'd get that cart back'.²¹⁵

Yet, the promotion of female labour in agriculture was a subject which was an integral thread in the discourses of patriotism expressed by not solely notable women of the

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2000) pp. 178-180.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

²¹³ L. Morgan, 'Women and Work on the Land', *North Devon Journal*, 3 February 1916, p. 6.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ IWM: 506, Mary Lees, Transcript, 1974, p. 36.

county but also by other members of Devon's elite. This was evident in the hearings of the DAT. An example of this was the session of the DAT held on 29 September 1916 where Heathcoat-Amory made an appeal on behalf of the DAT 'to the Women of Devonshire, particularly to the wives and daughters of men who were accustomed to work on the land, to realise that they could lend very valuable help by assisting farmers when they offered them a reasonable wage'.²¹⁶ It can be argued that the DAT provided the 'provincial patriots' with a new platform, like meetings of various wartime organisations, to broadcast their entreaties to Devon's population. In the case of women labour in agriculture, DAT's members also advocated for and prescribed the necessity of the wartime measures. This was present during the same hearing of the DAT when Heathcoat-Amory brought attention to the fact that in Tiverton the delivery of milk for the town's population was undertaken by a team of twenty farmers.²¹⁷ He argued that the time that these twenty farmers could deliver the milk had past and their energies were better invested working on the land. As an Appeal Tribunal, he proposed that they 'no longer found themselves able to say it was in the nation's interest that they should continue such [an] occupation'.²¹⁸ Alternatively, the members of the DAT advocated that the work of delivering milk across the mid-Devon town could be accomplished by women. The explicit exhortative role of Devon's elite was also noticeable in their verdicts towards the appeals for exemption. An example of this was an appeal from a farm labourer on 20 October 1916. During this session of the DAT, Heathcoat-Amory exhorted to the appellant's representative Mr A. M. Alford that the DAT could not have 'men sitting down and telling them week after week that they could not get women to do the work. Devonshire women, he felt sure, were not less patriotic than other parts of

²¹⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 30 September 1916.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the country'.²¹⁹ Alford disagreed with Heathcoat-Amory and replied that Devon's women could not undertake work on a dairy farm during the winter. However, Heathcoat-Amory responded in an infuriated tone that it was 'no good farmers coming here and telling us they won't or can't try to get them'.²²⁰ From the way in which Heathcoat-Amory replied to Alford's protestation, it could be expressed that the sessions of the DAT provided the DAT's members with an opportunity to convey not only what was expected of Devon's men but also exhort the role that the county's women should undertake. Therefore, Devon's local and Appeal Tribunals became important sites in the campaigns of superintendence launched by the 'provincial patriots' to police the accepted norms of behaviour in wartime. In addition, the commentaries and prescriptions that were attached to these verdicts were disseminated to a wider audience across the county through the local press with the intention of adding significant endorsement to the appeals of Devon's elite.

The Liberal MP for Camborne, Sir Francis Acland, recalled a similar occurrence from the DWWSC to the House of Commons on 22 May 1916.²²¹ A farmer had complained to the President of the DWWSC, Mrs Milday, that he could not find a single woman to spread manure on his farm. She responded to this challenge and organised her house party of ladies to the farm. After they had completed the task, the astonished farmer paid them for the work and they donated their wages to the Red Cross. Acland concluded that this display 'ought to make a really considerable impression in that county'.²²² Acland's anecdote was intended to raise the patriotic merits of Mildmay's party of ladies. Conversely, F. M. Dickinson, the secretary for the DWWSC, sought to clarify Acland's anecdote to the House with a letter to *The Times* on 3 June 1916. This

²¹⁹ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 21 October 1916.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 82, 22 May 1916, Column 1855.

²²² *Ibid.*

was because she believed that Acland had scarcely given ‘due honour to the women of South Devon’.²²³ Actually, her house party of ladies comprised of women not just from the upper classes. Indeed, the women who took part with Mrs Mildmay were rich and poor: ‘I may add that the same women have continued to work ever since, pulling turnips, clearing stones off the land, and doing other jobs required of them’.²²⁴ According to Dickinson, this group of women had undeniably set a precedent for the women of Devon to which they had ‘not been slow to follow’.²²⁵

Despite the rhetoric which emphasized the success of these female endeavours in Devon, it was evident that these accomplishments did not alter the perception of some of Devon’s farmers towards the gendered division of work. This is confirmed in Sylvia Calmady Hamlyn’s letter to the editor of *The Times* on 28 April 1916. She recalled a conversation that she had with the wife of a Devon smallholder whose son was serving in the armed forces. During their discussion about the prospect of women working on the land, the wife asked her a rhetorical question: would farmers ‘ever employ women so long as they can keep back their sons? Why if they tried women and found they could really help, their sons might have to go!’²²⁶ Hence, the wife explained to Hamlyn that the employment of women was neither indicative of ignorance nor prejudice by farmers towards the capabilities of women working on the land. Instead, the utilisation of women labour in Devon’s agriculture was understood by some farmers as a threat to the survival of individual farms’ as family businesses. In fact, the appeals of Devon’s farmers against the conscription of their sons did stress that if their sons were conscripted this would mean that they would struggle to continue their businesses. In some worst case scenarios, these farmers would have little choice but to sell their herds.

²²³ *The Times*, 3 June 1916, p. 9.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *The Times*, 28 April 1916, p. 7.

Nevertheless, the effects of conscription had become evident in the declining availability of male agricultural labour in some districts of Devon. For instance, the Dartmouth Branch of the NFU had ‘reported a decline in production values on farms in South Devon’.²²⁷ The productivity of Devon’s agriculture had weakened to the extent that the members of the DCWAC were resolved on 6 May 1916 to petition the chairman of the local agricultural committees, and the Tribunals across Devon to consider the importance of the harvest. Accordingly, in the view of the serious scarcity of male labour on farms in Devon, this Committee viewed with ‘alarm any proposal to take more men from the land; and strongly deprecates the recruiting of any men who are only fit for home service’.²²⁸ In a similar move to help improve the harvest, Honiton Rural District Council (HRDC) on 21 May 1916 requested the surveyor of the district’s roads to ‘release as many men as possible during the harvest, in order to help the Farmers’.²²⁹

The minutes of the DCWAC for 4 August 1916 reveal that there were approximately ‘2472 women available for work on the land’.²³⁰ However, despite the number of women available to work in agriculture, DCC concluded in August 1916 that the response from Devon’s women and farmers ‘was not encouraging and the lists gathered by the Women’s War Agricultural Committee’s do not reflect the actual attitudes of the people of Devon’.²³¹ In comparison, by June 1916 there were 5,000 women who had registered their names with the Women’s War Agricultural Committee in Kent.²³² It was suggested that few of the 5,000 women who registered themselves for agricultural

²²⁷ Bonnie White, ‘Feeding the war effort: agricultural experiences in First World War Devon, 1914-1917’, *Agricultural History Review* Vol. 58, Part I (2010) p. 108.

²²⁸ TNA: MAF 80/4998, Devon War Agricultural Committee, War Agricultural Committee Minutes of 6 May 1916, 6 May 1916, p. 2.

²²⁹ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915-1920, 21 May 1916, p. 72.

²³⁰ TNA: MAF 80/4998, Devon War Agricultural Committee, 4 August 1916, folio 11.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² W. A. Armstrong, ‘Kentish Rural Society during the First World War’ in B. A. Holdness and M. Turner eds., *Land, Labour and Agriculture, 1790-1920: Essays for Gordon Mingray* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991) p. 117.

labour were available for continuous hard work on the land. The reason for this was that some women were distracted and ‘beguiled by high wages in the munitions works and others content with their separation allowances or income derived from billeting soldiers in their houses’.²³³ Moreover, Kent’s farmers also resorted to employing 1,668 children for service in agriculture. A report from September 1916 conducted by the DWWSC also revealed that Devon’s farmers were still hesitant to employ women as substitute labour on their farms and instead were keeping their sons. In fact, the report stated that the women in the county were not ready to show any readiness to work on the land until ‘more of the farmers’ sons are gone’.²³⁴ A similar verdict was later professed by Kekewich during a meeting of the DAT Committee on 26 May 1916. He noted that women labour in Lancashire and other counties was being employed to a much greater extent when compared to the low numbers of women in Devon’s agricultural sector.²³⁵ This is apparent when viewing the statistics from Devon which confirm that in 1916 there were still 4,461 farmers’ sons working on the land.²³⁶ Notwithstanding the number of women available to work on the land, the statistics reveal many of Devon’s farmers had resorted to other alternative sources of manpower. This included 1,786 soldiers as well as 225 Prisoners of War (POW).²³⁷ Accordingly, this confirms the suggestion that in September 1916, it was perceived that Devon’s farmers were managing to ‘carry on without the help of women’.²³⁸ At the same time, Bonnie White suggests that an ‘inadequate supply of horse harnesses and a deficiency of ploughmen made the problems in Devon even more acute’.²³⁹

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ TNA: MAF 59/1, Women’s County Committees - organisation of labour, September 1916, p. 4.

²³⁵ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 26 May 1916, p. 14.

²³⁶ DHC: 1262M/L140, Labour Officer’s Report, 17 April 1918.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ TNA: MAF 59/1, Women’s County Committees - organisation of labour, September 1916, p. 4.

²³⁹ Bonnie White, ‘Sowing the seeds of patriotism? The Women’s Land Army in Devon, 1916-1918’, *The Local Historian* Vol. 41, 1 (February 2011) p. 21.

A valuable point of comparison with the attempts to change the perceptions of the gendered division of labour in Devon's farming industry was the experience of Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory in his attempts to introduce female labour into the JHC lace factory at Tiverton. Gail Braybon points out that during the two decades before the First World War, the introduction of machinery had steadily eroded women's dominance in the lace industry.²⁴⁰ However, the introduction of conscription meant that the male labour force of Heathcoat-Amory's factory were in an increasingly vulnerable position as conscription posed a threat to the future of their jobs. In January 1916, the factory's management proposed to introduce female labour in the factory in order to replace the male workers who could be called up to serve in the Army. These proposals by Heathcoat-Amory created a distinct tension between the factory's male workforce and the factory's management. On 27 January 1916, Heathcoat-Amory discussed with the Men's Committee of Lacehands (MCL) the suggestion to employ women to work the lace machines. Only 27 members of the MCL voted in favour of Heathcoat-Amory's proposal compared to the 36 who voted against women working the factory's lace machines.²⁴¹ The results of the vote reveal the reluctance to which the workforce responded to a scheme for the replacement of labour in the factory. With the impending introduction of the MSA, the lace-hands were concerned that this measure could have rendered them redundant and available for military service. When the chairman reported the MCL's election result to Heathcoat-Amory, he stressed that to put women on the machines was purely a 'wartime expedient and that if it took place it would cease when the war ended'.²⁴² After a discussion among the MCL's members, a second vote produced another majority vote that dismissed Heathcoat-Amory's proposal by 44

²⁴⁰ Gail Braybon, *Women workers in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 30.

²⁴¹ Tiverton Museum: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 27 January 1916, p. 171.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

members to 31.²⁴³ However, the MCL offered Heathcoat-Amory a compromise in which they would work until 10 pm which was one hour longer each day.²⁴⁴ According to their spokesman, this would mean that the existing male workforce would yield a better result ‘than if women had been employed to work the French machines’ to make lace.²⁴⁵ Notwithstanding this compromise, Heathcoat-Amory clarified in these discussions that he had not requested them to work longer hours and their offer to increase their working hours would mean that their working day would start at 6am and finish at 10pm.²⁴⁶ In his opinion, this was ‘really too long for men to work’.²⁴⁷

The problem of employment was made ever more apparent to Heathcoat-Amory with the arrival of two factory inspectors in February 1916. During both inspections by Mr W. E. Harding and Mr J. H. Rogers, on 12 and 17 February respectively, it was emphasized to the factory’s management that they must ascertain the factory’s exact requirements which included ‘women night spinners, and to elicit information in regard to our Twishands and their possible exemption from military service’.²⁴⁸ On 8 March 1916, the factory’s management submitted applications to the Tiverton Tribunal for the exemption of six male lace-makers. Mr W. H. Huxtable represented the lace manufacturer and in their defence, argued that it was in the national interest that these six skilled men should stay in their present occupations.²⁴⁹ He explained the reasons for the indispensability of these six men was that lace-makers required years of training, there was only a limited number and they could not be replaced. According to Huxtable, it was crucial to maintain the Tiverton factory’s output because ninety per cent of the lace manufactured at Tiverton was exported to America and the return for this business

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 17 February 1916, p. 173.

²⁴⁹ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 8 March 1916, p. 174.

came in ‘the form of English gold’.²⁵⁰ Moreover, Huxtable assured the Tribunal of the JHC’s patriotic credentials in that they had done everything they could to encourage men to enlist and they had convinced fifty men. This was an evident factor because Heathcoat-Amory was a local notable who had been prolific in his efforts from August 1914 to appeal to the factory’s employees and the men of Tiverton to volunteer for the Armed Forces.²⁵¹ As a result, Huxtable assured the Tribunal that the business had reached the ‘irreducible minimum’ of workers in the factory, with one-third of the lace machines in the manufacturing works now idle.²⁵² Huxtable argued that the Tribunal should consider that the firm was also engaged in a large capacity of government work manufacturing munitions for which men had been taken from the lacemaking department. Consequently, Huxtable warned the Tribunal panel that if these men were not granted exemption than there would be disastrous consequences for the business because if ‘any more machines were closed down there would not be sufficient output to provide work for the women and girls now employed’.²⁵³

The Mayor of Tiverton, Alfred T. Gregory reflected upon the business that Heathcoat-Amory was bringing to the local area. Despite the fact that lace was deemed to be a luxury item, to Gregory it was essential for the war effort to preserve the ‘level of exchange between this county and America’.²⁵⁴ The Tiverton Tribunal’s military representative, Captain Boles, argued that the Army required these six lace-makers to do their duty. A member of the Tiverton Tribunal, Mr Peters asked Huxtable whether the firm could employ retired lace-makers who were former employees of the factory to work the lace machines.²⁵⁵ However, Huxtable confessed that he had previously spoken

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ White, ‘Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire’, p.646.

²⁵² TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 8 March 1916, p. 174.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

to two retired lace-makers but he felt that their very bad eyesight would render them unable to work on the factory's machines. Another retired lace-maker was interested in the proposal to come out of retirement to make lace but Huxtable believed that the return of this man was very doubtful. After this, the Tribunal considered the application of the six lace-makers in private and granted exemption to all of them for three months in which they hoped that the business 'would be able to make arrangements to fill the places of the men'.²⁵⁶ Subsequently, the Tribunal's verdict and the scrutiny of the reviews that were continually conducted by the Superintendent Inspectors of Factories placed added emphasis and pressure upon Heathcoat-Amory to try to negotiate with the male employees to accept young women to work on the machines.

On 27 March 1916, Heathcoat-Amory attempted to convince the MCL along with the lace foreman and the entire staff of lace-makers to accept the help of young women in the lace shops, in view of the fact that it 'was highly probable that all eligible lace-makers will be called up'.²⁵⁷ He also asked the men if they could teach the young women all that they possibly could. To clinch the proposal, the management promised to pay each man who volunteered an extra 5/- per week for a month to which they agreed to accept this proposal.²⁵⁸ However, the issue of conscription continued to linger over the reliability of production in the factory. On 5 May 1916, Heathcoat-Amory proposed another scheme to his workforce. He proposed for two lace-hands to work with the help of three young women '(or two boys & one young woman) as a strictly war measure' in order to restart the machines that were stopped due to the loss of the lace-hands who had joined the Territorial's or the Army.²⁵⁹ Indeed, the concern over the factory's productivity in the light of the 'almost certainty of more of the men being

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 27 March 1916, p. 175.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 5 May 1916, p. 177.

"called up'" was a factor that Heathcoat-Amory had to consider in his deliberations with the lace-hands.²⁶⁰ According to the secretary around a third or a quarter of the machines in the factory had stopped on this account and if this scheme was implemented they 'might be put to work again'.²⁶¹ He explained that the four-machine scheme emphasized the benefits of using two men and three helpers on a single machine. However, during the discussion of his proposal on 8 May 1916, it was evident that 'the men generally did not view the proposition with favour'.²⁶² The lace-hands objected because the responsibility for this scheme was 'too great to be undertaken by the men' and women were, in their view, incapable physically of 'doing much, or at least some, of the work connected with lacemaking'.²⁶³ Furthermore, they argued that it would take the replacement workforce a long time to 'make anything like efficient helpers' and there were times when 'women were feeble and inert'.²⁶⁴ Some of lace-hands were primarily concerned that to 'place young women with men and boys [was] hinting at the danger of possible indelicacy'.²⁶⁵ Finally, if sufficient information was placed before women they 'would not be able to judge if the pecuniary results of the scheme would sufficiently remunerate them if they undertook to try it'.²⁶⁶ It could be ventured that this list of reasons from the lace-hands were intended to reinforce the validity of their objection to Heathcoat-Amory's proposal and to strengthen their case that they should keep their jobs.

Yet, this compendium did not support the lace-hands objection and actually gave an impression that the lace-hands were prejudiced against the capabilities of female labour. According to the meeting's note taker, Heathcoat-Amory fought against these

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 8 May 1916, p. 178.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

protestations from his workforce with considerable force and skill.²⁶⁷ After the meeting, Heathcoat-Amory confessed that he was ‘bitterly disappointed at the attitudes that the men had taken up’.²⁶⁸ He pleaded with his workforce to reconsider his proposals with a small trial and requested their answer in two to three days. The idea that the workforce was to lose more ground to young women could mean that they would inevitably become replaced with a female workforce.²⁶⁹ It should also be considered that the lace-hands and the MCL were concerned that the introduction of women as a temporary wartime measure could become standard practice for the post-war period. Hence, the perseverance of the lace-hands to retain their jobs can underline how their resistance towards the employment of young women fed into not only the tension between individual priorities and those of the nation but also their suspicion of this measure deemed to be a necessary expedient in wartime. Despite the reservations of the lace-hands, it would appear on 11 May 1916 with the arrival of Miss Slocock, HM Inspector of Factories from the HO, that the factory had started substituting male lace-makers. It was revealed during Slocock’s inspection that the Tiverton factory had taken on 23 women to undertake work which had previously undertaken by men and that ‘out of the twenty of the 23 were in lace shops learning to become lace makers’.²⁷⁰ In light of the fact that there was an increasing number of machines in the lace factory that were no longer in the use, there was no doubt that Heathcoat-Amory as an employer had little to no choice in slowly introducing women lace-hands to keep lace in production. Upon hearing this development, Slocock was very pleased at which she compared the situation at Tiverton with the state of female labour in two lace factories in the Somerset.²⁷¹ In Illminster, an anonymous lace factory was employing two women and

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 11 May 1916, p. 179.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

had made great efforts to engage women.²⁷² By contrast, a lace factory in Chard had made no attempt to replace the male lace-makers with women.²⁷³ Simultaneously, lace-makers in the lace making union based in Nottingham had ‘struck against the employment of women as twisthands’.²⁷⁴ However, Slocock stressed that there was a non-union lace factory that employed women as lace-makers as an experiment and she believed that they were making a success of it. Therefore, this helps to validate Braybon’s point that the substitution of male labour with female labour varied ‘not just from industry to industry but factory to factory’.²⁷⁵

Nevertheless, even after Slocock’s inspection and commendation to the factory’s management of the employment of 23 women in the factory, another two inspectors visited the Tiverton factory to enquire ‘what was being done to introduce female labour into lace-making rooms’.²⁷⁶ Therefore, the effects of the HO Inspectors resolve to employ women were made ever more apparent to Amory. On 12 May 1916, Heathcoat-Amory admitted in a letter to Earl Fortescue that due to the Inspectors insistence to employ women the exemptions of the lace-makers who were married were rejected.²⁷⁷ Later on 15 May 1916, the workforce put forward a different scheme in which they suggested that ‘three men were to work four 6 yd. machines with the help of their boys and one young girl (about 15 years of age).’²⁷⁸ They agreed that the girls should receive the same rate of pay as the boys employed at the factory. Heathcoat-Amory accepted their proposal and assigned that the trial would commence on 22 May 1916. As a point of comparison, six women also started working in the munitions room of the factory on

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ Braybon, *Women workers in the First World War*, p. 60.

²⁷⁶ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 19 May 1916, p. 181.

²⁷⁷ DHC: 1262M/L122, Letter from Heathcoat-Amory to Fortescue, 12 May 1916.

²⁷⁸ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 8 May 1916, p. 180.

22 May 1916.²⁷⁹ It could be hazarded that Heathcoat-Amory was concerned that if his factory did not comply with the HO inspectors' requests then the conduct of his business could receive additional criticism and they could have lost the contract to build shells for the British war effort. Similarly, French industrialists who produced shells faced pressure from bureaucrats in what was a tense relationship where the former fought 'for the best interests of their firms, [and were] continually aware that their current prosperity could be instantly jeopardised by any one of the technical adjustments which bureaucrats constantly brought forward'.²⁸⁰ Therefore, like Heathcoat-Amory, the French industrialists had to balance the requests of various parties to ensure the financial survival of their business throughout the war.²⁸¹

There were other ways in which Devon's women could also demonstrate their patriotism and claim citizenship in the wartime community. As mentioned previously, charitable efforts provided Devonians such as women, the elderly and children who were outside the requirements of military service an opportunity to claim moral citizenship in the wartime community on the Home Front. Rebecca Gill suggests that feminists presented the large scale involvement of women in humanitarian efforts as an 'act of patriotism meriting political representation'.²⁸² Therefore, it is clear that the 'impression of independent actions was crucial to the functioning of charitable appeals and the policing of the shifting line between state and voluntary responsibility'.²⁸³ The manner of different types of war work which indicated a woman's patriotism was manifest in an article in the *North Devon Journal* on 13 April 1916. This article concerned a sixteen year old girl working in Barnstaple who had 'every reason to be

²⁷⁹ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900-1929, 22 May 1916, p. 181.

²⁸⁰ John F. Godfrey, *Capitalism at War: Industrial Policy and Bureaucracy in France, 1914-1918* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1987) p. 212.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-220.

²⁸² Rebecca Gill, 'Calculating Compassion in War: The "New Humanitarian" Ethos in Britain, 1870-1918', University of Manchester, PhD Thesis, 2005, p. 169.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

proud of her work for War causes'.²⁸⁴ In her spare time, she made eight pairs of socks and two pairs of knee caps. With one exception, she had paid for the material to make these goods and the transport of the material, out of her own finances. According to the newspaper, the girl's efforts were 'an example of patriotism worthy of the highest commendation'.²⁸⁵ In March 1916, the introduction of the War Charities Act (WCA) was intended to curtail cases of fraud and established a system of licensing.²⁸⁶ Many of the philanthropic organisations in Devon that were in financial difficulty appealed to escape this legislation and some were successful. For example, the Alphington Belgian Refugee Charity (ABRC) was created to assist in the maintenance of a single family of Belgian refugees. Nevertheless, since the ABRC focused their efforts on one family, they fell into difficulties possibly because of the ABRC's limited appeal. As a result, the ABRC applied for exemption as the 'amount of subscriptions and donations administered [was] very limited, and only devoted to support two members of one family'.²⁸⁷ This plight was not an exception as a significant number of charities in Devon were granted exemption from the regulations set out in the 1916 legislation for the same reason: 'The amount of subscriptions and donations to be administered, and the area of collection, being very limited'.²⁸⁸ However, Gerard DeGroot argues that the introduction of this legislation by the state did not dampen the generosity from the general public because 'so prolific were volunteers collecting donations on the streets that the public began to complain of the nuisance'.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ *North Devon Journal*, 13 April 1916, p. 5.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ DeGroot, *Blighty*, p. 65.

²⁸⁷ TNA: CHAR 4/15 WAR CHARITIES ACT 1916: List of Exemptions, Anglesey-Devon (Devon), Alphington Belgian Refugee Charity, 1916, p. 735.

²⁸⁸ TNA: CHAR 4/15 WAR CHARITIES ACT 1916: List of Exemptions, Anglesey-Devon (Devon), Axmouth Branch of the British Red Cross Society, 27 August 1917, p. 737.

²⁸⁹ DeGroot, *Blighty*, p. 65. This increased level of support for non-uniformed voluntary action after the introduction of WCA was reinforced by Peter Russell Grant, 'Mobilizing Charity: non-uniformed voluntary action during the First World War', City University London, PhD thesis, 2012, pp. 335-386.

The experiences of minority groups in Devon during 1916

At the same time as Devon's notables superintended the patriotism of Devon's men during appeals for exemption, there were members of Devon's elite and the county's population who were concerned about the patriotism and loyalty of certain minority groups in Devon. David Cesarani suggests that because the Jewish population in Britain was part of a supra-national group, it was unavoidably in wartime that their presence 'provoked questions of identity and allegiance'.²⁹⁰ This was also evident in Devon as suspicions were raised about the loyalty of the county's Jewish communities. As a school-child during the war, F. Ashe Lincoln recalled in an interview that he, along with other Jews in Plymouth, had experienced a 'tremendous amount of anti-Semitism'.²⁹¹ In fact, he suggested that the anti-Semitism in the city was 'very marked in the middle part of the war, and to some extent we suffered a great deal from it during the war, verbal attacks and physical attacks'.²⁹² He remembered that, due to the depth of such intense anger against Germans in Plymouth, Jews were frequently bombarded with accusations that Jews were Germans and any Jew was 'regarded as being good game'.²⁹³ Lincoln's account goes on to mention that the physical attacks from other children at his school were ferocious in nature:

Jews were attacked right, left and centre and all Jews were described as being "Germans". I mean, my brother and I suffered many attack from schoolboys in Plymouth, being called "German Jews", and we had at one time to get special protection from our

²⁹⁰ David Cesarani, 'An Embattled Minority: the Jews in Britain during the First World War' in T. Kushner and K. Lunn eds., *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1990) p. 61.

²⁹¹ University of Leeds: Liddle Collection, DF 148, Recollections relating to the Domestic Front: Lincoln, F. A., 2000, p. 2.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

school, from the Head Master; because of the number of attacks that were made on us. Our clothes were torn, and so on.²⁹⁴

Susanne Terwey argues that during the war there were serious concerns from Britain's Jewish communities that anti-Semitism and Germanophobia were becoming blurred phenomena. This situation became worse after the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915 when there was increased Germanophobia and mob violence against Jews across the urban centres of Britain. The *Jewish Weekly* was adamant that the British press had played on the idea of the 'alleged identity of Jews with Germans'.²⁹⁵ This was to the extent that ““Jew” and “German” were being used by many in Britain as synonymous terms'.²⁹⁶ However, Terwey points out that it is open for debate whether the *Jewish Weekly* was entirely correct in the assumption that all Jews were identified as Germans. However, what it does reveal is that as a contemporary source, the *Jewish Weekly* sensed that these prejudices were widespread enough for calls for peace to be published in the press.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, Lincoln's testimony indicates that this was also the case in Plymouth. Yet, in spite of the occurrences of Germanophobia in Plymouth, it is also important to note that members of Plymouth's Hebrew Congregation presented their allegiance to Britain and the war effort through the war.²⁹⁸ Similarly, despite the presentations of allegiance to the majority society evident in the self-mobilization of Germany's Jews on the Home Front and the presence of Jewish soldiers in the German Army, Germany's Jewish community continued to be perceived by many Germans as

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Susanne Terwey, 'Stereotypical bedfellows: The combination of Anti-Semitism with Germanophobia in Great Britain, 1914-1918' in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) p. 133.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Western Morning News*, 4 March 1915, p. 6, Plymouth and West Devon Record Office: 2825/7, Plymouth Hebrew Congregation Minute Book, 1917-1963, pp. 1-24, Todd Gray, *Lest Devon Forgets: Service, Sacrifice and the Creation of Great War Memorials* (Exeter: Mint Press, 2010) p. 29.

the internal enemy.²⁹⁹ According to Stuart Dalley, concerns about the activities of German nationals were also present in Cornwall. In 1916, the novelist D. H. Lawrence and his German wife Frieda moved to Cornwall and became subjected to ‘constant police monitoring and were eventually hounded out on trumped up charges of spying and provisioning German submarines on the Cornish coast’.³⁰⁰ This led Lawrence to remark that these concerns were ‘a wave of criminal lust [which] rose and possessed England’.³⁰¹

Nevertheless, these attacks against Plymouth’s Jews and on Lawrence’s wife were not isolated occurrences. This was evident in the suspicion and accusations that were levelled against the German nationals who were a part of the Benedictine community of Monks at Buckfast Abbey. By 1916, the Buckfast Monks comprised mostly of French and German born monks who were dedicated towards the peaceful principles of the monk Benedict. Nevertheless, it was perceived by the local populations of Buckfastleigh and Ashburton that this community of religious holy men were the perfect cover for secret agents to carry out reconnaissance. A factor that may have contributed to the concerns of the local communities surrounding the Abbey was previously in August 1914 when the Abbot of the Abbey, Anscar Verner, was arrested whilst on holiday in Austria on accusations of being an English spy.³⁰² It was the middle of October 1914 before the Abbot was released and only after the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order of Rome had made representations to the Austrian ambassador about his detention.³⁰³ Moreover, in 1915, a HO committee exempted the monks from

²⁹⁹ Christhard Hoffmann, ‘Between integration and rejection: the Jewish community in Germany, 1914-1918’ in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp. 89-104.

³⁰⁰ Stuart Dalley, ‘The response in Cornwall to the outbreak of the First World War’, *Cornish Studies*, Vol. 11, (2003) p. 106.

³⁰¹ DeGroot, *Blighty*, p. 195.

³⁰² Dom John Stephan, *A History of Buckfast Abbey* (Bristol: The Burleigh Press, 1970) pp. 332-333.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

internment on the condition that they ‘retained residence at the Abbey and the Abbot undertook to give notice to the Police if anyone left’.³⁰⁴ This edict meant that the Abbey became a prohibited area to be watched by Special Constables and the monks were interned within the Abbey’s grounds. According to J. C. Bird, Buckfast Abbey became the most unusual ‘internment camp’ in Britain because, while the monks were confined to the Abbey’s grounds they were allowed to continue their activities uninterrupted.³⁰⁵ As a consequence of their internment, the rumours and conjecture surrounding the loyalty of the German monks at Buckfast Abbey continued to create grave concerns on a local level.

Tammy M. Proctor suggests that the internment of civilians who were deemed to be enemy aliens was problematic because it exposed the ambiguity of the civil/military divide which created ‘categories of people who did not fit neatly in either’.³⁰⁶ The German and Austrian monks were still perceived to be a threat to not only national security but also the stability of the surrounding area. The evidence of how Devonians perceived the Buckfast Monks reinforces Panikos Panayi’s point that the minority community of German Monks were ‘representatives of the enemy who have lived within the country at war with their land of origin for a prolonged period’.³⁰⁷ As a consequence of the blurring of the boundaries between civilian and combatant, serious suspicions were still expressed during 1916 by the local populations in the surrounding area around the Abbey. It was these suspicions which provided the impetus for a sustained campaign by members of Devon’s elite to advocate for the vigilance of the

³⁰⁴ TNA: HO 45/23540, part 49, ALIENS (See separate headings for NATIONALITY and NATURALISATION): Monks of German origin at Buckfast Abbey: restriction measures, Home Office file, 17 November 1919, p. 1.

³⁰⁵ J. C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918* (New York: Garland, 1986) p. 135.

³⁰⁶ Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) p. 205.

³⁰⁷ Panikos Panayi, ‘Dominant Societies and Minorities in the Two World Wars’ in P. Panayi ed., *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Berg, 1993) p. 5.

Buckfast Monks. This is evident in Lord Fortescue's wartime memoirs when he revealed that 'some busy person at Buckfastleigh' had written to him about the 'fuss about possible spying by the Priests at Buckfast Abbey'.³⁰⁸ In response, Fortescue suggested that this would be 'a nice job' for the local VTC to keep Buckfast's Monks under observation.³⁰⁹

On 3 April 1916, Buckfastleigh Urban District Council (BUDC) received a letter from the HO that complained against the treatment of the interned monks by the local council. However, BUDC's Councillors were resolved to see that the monks were taken from the Abbey and sent to an internment camp. They decided that BUDC's clerk should attempt in the matter of the German monks to gain the assistance of the Liberal Unionist MP for Tavistock, Sir John Spear. In this letter, it was agreed that BUDC should not only lay before him the facts of the Monks' internment but to implore him to 'ask a question of the Home Secretary in Parliament'.³¹⁰ Nonetheless, it was not until the summer of 1916 that questions about the status of the Buckfast Monks were raised in Parliament. During the House of Commons debate on 16 August 1916, George Lambert, the Liberal MP for South Molton, put forward an enquiry about this matter to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Herbert Samuel. Lambert queried whether the Buckfast Monks who were able to bear arms had been 'allowed to return to Germany; whether the censorship of letters, etc., is exercised by a naturalised German'.³¹¹ Ultimately, Lambert asked Samuel whether he was satisfied that 'national security is in no way jeopardised by the residence of these alien enemies under the conditions now imposed?'.³¹² In response to these enquiries, the Home Secretary replied that there were only a small number of the Buckfast Monks who were enemy nationals.

³⁰⁸ DHC: 1262M/FH42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 36.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³¹⁰ DHC: R2372A/C12, Minutes of Buckfastleigh Urban District Council, 1915-1916, 3 April 1916, p. 54.

³¹¹ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 85, 16 August 1916, column 1862.

³¹² *Ibid.*

Lambert revealed that an arrangement had been agreed for the monks, after consultation with the Chief Constable of Devonshire. It was deemed not necessary to ‘remove them from the Abbey, but strict conditions have been imposed in regards to their movements’.³¹³ None of the monks of military age had left the Abbey and their correspondence was monitored by the Abbot of the Abbey who was a naturalised British subject.³¹⁴ On 6 September 1916, both Lambert and Spear wrote to BUDC informing them of the questions that they had put forward in these Parliamentary debates. As a consequence of this, BUDC decided to write to the Home Secretary to ask to be ‘allowed to be represented at the inquiry proposed to be held’.³¹⁵

Conclusion

The local and Appeal Tribunals introduced in Devon under the auspices of the MSA in 1916 arbitrated ‘between the demands of the military and the interests of local communities, which were formulated in economic, moral or political terms’.³¹⁶ These tribunals were intended to herald a more impartial approach towards the question of manpower. This was evident in how Devon’s elite wanted to command the confidence of the county’s population in the apparatus of conscription that managed the arbitration of the appeals. In fact, Heathcoat-Amory wanted to present himself in his role as the DAT’s Chairman not necessarily as a wise judge such as the Biblical King Solomon. Instead, he was portrayed as a virtuous sheriff who would not be fooled with excuses, in the enforcement of a regulated and equitable system of conscription, and bring individuals who they deemed to be shirkers to account for their selfish behaviour. The evidence from Devon in 1916 asserts that the county’s elite viewed the tribunals as a means to extend their remit in their campaigns of superintendence upon the wartime

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ DHC: R2372A/C12, Minutes of Buckfastleigh Urban District Council, 1915-1916, 6 September 1916, p. 100.

³¹⁶ Purseigle, ‘Introduction’, p. 31

behaviour of Devonians. The ‘provincial patriots’ who were the members of tribunal panels across Devon were given added gravitas in their authority since they had become agents of the state and possessed the power over life and death for many Devonians. Gregory has suggested that the regulations inaugurated in the MSA became ‘mediated through a tribunal system which was intimate, highly personal, and closely scrutinized’.³¹⁷ Indeed, he has shown that the members of civic society who were members on the MST were not always benevolent.³¹⁸ Many tribunalists believed that they had sincerely considered the applications for exemption in an impartial manner, and that their conclusions were guided by a ‘full regard for the national interests of the country’.³¹⁹ However, the proceedings and decisions of the Tribunals were coloured by very human perspectives.³²⁰ This was true in Devon because the county’s tribunalists took a more active role on the tribunal panels in their adjudication of the appeals for exemption from Devon’s men. Instead, they took on an explicit exhortative role which provided them with an opportunity to extend their influence over local wartime politics and adjudicate upon the social morality of wartime.

Under their responsibility as the ‘superintendents of patriotism’, Devon’s Tribunalists expressed their views on patriotism and made value-judgments about the patriotism of Devon’s men. This was based on the merit of the claims for exemption from Devon’s men-folk along with the behaviour of appellants or those representing the appellants, from which they formulated if this constituted patriotic behaviour. The fact that some Devonians were more absorbed with the survival of their livelihoods and local priorities, despite the tribunal panel’s entreaties to consider the national interest, led some of Devon’s elite to deem their behaviour to be unpatriotic. In particular,

³¹⁷ Gregory, ‘Military Service Tribunals’, p. 189.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-190.

³¹⁹ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, pp. 156-157.

³²⁰ McDermott, ‘The Work of the Military Service Tribunals in Northamptonshire, 1916-1918’, p. 199.

individuals whose patriotism was clearly in doubt were CO's, so the sincerity of their beliefs was tested. The commentaries that accompanied the DAT's verdicts also reveal how the county's notables used these rulings to exhort, prescribe and advocate wartime measures. It is important to observe that Devon's elite were aware that the tribunal proceedings and in particular their comments, would reach a wider audience through the local press as the reporting of some sessions were intended to be both informative accounts and sensational news stories. This further strengthened the role of Devon's elite as the self-appointed arbiters of the social morality of wartime to which they could make further judgements about the necessity or luxury of certain occupations in wartime and ultimately prescribe how Devon's men-folk should behave. Yet, it must also be noted that some Devonians chose in 1916 to enlist in the Navy to escape the system of conscription and avoid the judgements of a Tribunal panel. This was also later evident in 1917 and 1918.³²¹ The tribunal hearings also reflected the constant negotiation that the 'provincial patriots' faced to superintend the social morality of wartime.

Yet, the task of adjudicating these applications for exemption was a trying one since the application of 'fairness' by these tribunals was 'as inconsistent as any human quality, and as vulnerable to external stimuli'.³²² Some decisions by tribunals in Devon, that placed an emphasis to dedicate manpower to military efficiency, there would be eventual criticism of an unsympathetic decision made by these agents of the state because 'occasions of apparent favouritism or harshness might have been grounded as much upon an honest appreciation of the facts of a case as upon any subjective criteria'.³²³ The decisions that some tribunals made along with the attempts to prescribe models of wartime behaviour to Devon's populace helped to accentuate a sense of

³²¹ William Stone, *Hero of the Fleet: Two World Wars, One extraordinary life – The Memoirs of Centenarian* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2009) p. 49.

³²² McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, p. 175.

³²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

'otherness' about Devon's elite on the tribunal panels. The men who stood before a tribunal panel saw these local notables as 'members of the same mechanism that worked tirelessly to take men from civilian life and place them in Khaki'.³²⁴ This indirectly strengthened the tension between the priorities of Devon's elite to exhort measures which were deemed to be necessary in the national interest and had manifested itself in the applications for exemption from the county's men-folk. Consequently, this 'otherness' was accentuated by the resentment of the interference to which the tribunals panels represented. Nevertheless, the paradoxical nature of the tribunal network in Devon helps to further emphasize the difficulties that the county's notables faced in the process to organise Devon's population to the needs of the war effort. The discretion of local tribunal panels to determine who could receive exemptions from conscription helped to create an inconsistent system of conscription. It was improbable that the men and women who sat as the tribunal panels across Devon did not subsume 'their own opinions and preconceptions entirely to the needs either of state or locality'.³²⁵ Therefore, individual tribunals in Devon, such as those in Ilfracombe, South Molton and Tiverton, were accused of favouritism towards applications for exemption. Hence, the idiosyncratic approach towards the processes of conscription underlines the fact that civil society in Devon was not united during 1916, because the war effort was not an all-encompassing principle.

The advent of conscription gave added impetus to the attempts by the women of Devon's elite to change perceptions surrounding the gendered division of labour. Despite the rhetoric of female volunteerism and attempts to enlighten Devon's farmers about the benefits of female labour, many of the county's agriculturalists were reluctant to employ women to work on the land. The persistence of traditional attitudes towards

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

the gendered division of labour should not be assumed necessarily to have been an example of male prejudice. Devon's Farmers were concerned that women could not handle the practicalities of working on the land and this prompted them to employ soldiers, POW's and the elderly. This was evident in the measures that were taken by some of Devon's farmers to keep their sons on the farm in an attempt to preserve the individual survival and future of their family business. However, the tribunals provided the 'provincial patriots' with a platform to broadcast their judgements to the farmers and the industries of Devon displaying the necessity to employ alternative sources of manpower in their work practices. In fact, tribunals provided Devon's elite the opportunity to express their expectations of the roles that women and men should undertake.³²⁶ At the same time, Devon's women and other Devonians outside the requirements of military service continued to support charitable organisations and claim moral citizenship in wartime despite the regulation of the WCA.

Nevertheless, the necessity for female labour was contested by the male lace-hands at JHC textile factory in Tiverton where Heathcoat-Amory faced a similar struggle to convince the MCL to employ women to make lace. As a manufacturer, Heathcoat-Amory could not make purely economic choices because he 'needed to think about political strategies to balance the different voices'.³²⁷ These voices were not only evident on his factory floor but were also apparent from the Inspectors of Factories and the members of the Tiverton Tribunal. The actions of Heathcoat-Amory emphasized the pressures that were felt by lace manufacturers in wartime to continue to produce lace and to also work with the war effort rather than against it. Resultantly, despite the problems that were experienced, the productivity achieved in the factory's textile

³²⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 23 December 1916.

³²⁷ Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1851-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p. 120.

segment in order to fulfil the American orders was extraordinary, whilst the factory's employees were also working diligently to increase the production number of shells. There were also concerns raised by some of Devon's residents towards the patriotism and loyalty of Plymouth's Jews and the monks of Buckfast Abbey. The latter prompted MP's along with local councillors to call upon the HO to remove the German monks from Buckfast Abbey since their patriotism was not easily ascertained and became the subject of campaigns of vigilance and surveillance by local authorities.

The 'provincial patriots' continued in their attempts to exhort and convince some men and women in Devon of the necessity of the measures introduced by the State in the national interest. As agents who were the police-men and women of patriotism, they saw that their work of administering these tribunals was not a popular mechanism of wartime intervention. Its enforcement through MST's was dependent upon the abilities of the individual members of Devon's elite since they administered and represented the system of conscription on a local level. The constant negotiation between the 'provincial patriots' and appellants exhibited at tribunal hearings, revealed that they still struggled to reconcile the tension between individual and national priorities. In fact, the tension between the prescriptions of Devon's elite and the criticism and responses of various Devonians that emerged during the tribunal hearings in 1916 were echoed in the subsequent hearings that occurred in 1917 and 1918. The failure of the harvest of 1916, as well as the fall of Asquith's Coalition Government helped pave the way to remobilization for complete victory in 1917-1918.

Chapter 4:

The effects of remobilization

1917-1918

Introduction

In Devon, despite the successes that were achieved through the mechanisms of ‘self-mobilization’, the county’s notables came to the realisation through the experiences of 1914 to 1916 had shown that ‘self-mobilization for the war was a differentiated, uneven process’.¹ By the spring of 1917, it became evident that the casualties incurred by the military offensives of 1914, 1915 and 1916, had shaken the resolve of the belligerent nations. The military casualties, the tension between the fighting front and the home front, food shortages and other factors all helped to undermine the resolve of populations on national and local levels in their support for the war. This was evident in Russia because both the Tsarist regime and the Provisional Government had collapsed in February and October 1917, respectively, as a result of war-weariness, food riots and the tensions between the Eastern Front and the Russian Home Front.² According to John Horne, what the states of the combatant nations understood as ““morale” and “loyalty” was in fact a public opinion that grew in complexity as the war turned into a test of endurance’.³ It was clear that by 1917 some Devonians were weary of the war and its duration. This was evident in the journal entry of Plymouth preacher James Thomas Rogers on 13 June 1917. After he had heard the news of the carnage caused by the most serious air raid on London yet, he questioned in a tone of disbelief and

¹ John Horne, ‘Public Opinion and Politics’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 283.

² David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2005) pp. 301-311, Eric Lohr, ‘Russia’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 488-489, Peter Gatrell, *Russia’s First World War: A Social and Economic History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005) pp. 198, 215.

³ Horne, ‘Public Opinion and Politics’, p. 283.

exhaustion how much longer could the war continue: ‘How long O Lord? How long!’⁴ Similarly, when Teignmouth resident, Albert Best, reflected on the third anniversary of the declaration of war on 4 August 1917, he admitted in his diary that ‘no one expected it [the war] was going to be such a big thing lasting so long. It is not finished yet, nor is the end in sight, but all round they are anxiously talking of peace’.⁵

The spectre of war-weariness was present on both the fighting front and the home front and posed a significant threat to the test of endurance of the belligerent nations. The concerns over war-weariness were felt in France during the spring of 1917 because the morale of civilian and soldier was a factor that ‘could no longer be safely ignored’ by the state.⁶ The French army mutinies in May and June 1917, the failure of the Champagne offensive in June, and manifestations of war-weariness during that year had inevitable repercussions upon the French war effort because this combination of factors appeared to ‘seriously question continued French participation in the war’.⁷ Similarly, there were concerns in Britain as to whether the country could continue its participation in the war during 1917. The faded resolve was apparent in the Liberal Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, who could no longer endure the escalating responsibilities of directing the British war effort.⁸ This led to David Lloyd George, the Secretary of State for War, becoming Prime Minister in December 1916.⁹ Upon hearing this news, Edrica de la Pole was hopeful that under Lloyd George’s premiership that ‘now perhaps we shall

⁴ Plymouth and West Devon Record Office: 3010-1, Journal of James Thomas Rogers, 1884-1927, 13 June 1917, p. 236.

⁵ Albert Best, *The Diaries of Albert Best: A resident of Teignmouth: Part 3, 1st January 1914 to 9th September 1920*, ed. by Alan Best (Torquay: Alan Best, 2009) 4 August 1917, p. 78.

⁶ Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Providence: Berg, 1985) p. 217.

⁷ Smith, ‘France’, p. 424, Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, pp. 195-235, Annette Becker, ‘The Churches and the War’ in J.-J. Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, p. 190

⁸ Richard Toye, *Lloyd George & Churchill: Rivals for Greatness* (London: Macmillan, 2007) pp. 168-169.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

“get a move on” with the War.¹⁰ In addition, the significant causalities incurred during the offensives of 1916 and 1917 had contributed to weakening the confidence and resolve of the British to support the war through the course of 1917.¹¹ Consequently, during 1917 and 1918, the most immediate dangers perceived in both Britain and France seemed to be ‘from war-weariness, from a detachment of sections of the population from the national effort, rather than from political opposition to war’.¹²

Leonard V. Smith suggests that the war had become transformed by 1917 into a ‘struggle between the irresistible force of total mobilization, sustained by consent, and the immovable object of the lines of the trenches themselves’.¹³ Horne argues that the crisis of the home front morale in France and Britain during 1917 challenged the very process of self-mobilization.¹⁴ Indeed, Adrian Gregory suggests that the low point in British public confidence was between October 1917 and February 1918 because to contemporaries the ‘prospects never seemed bleaker’.¹⁵ In Britain and France, the state faced the ‘problem for the remainder of the war of how to restore and maintain support for military victory and of whether to change the balance between coercion and persuasion’.¹⁶ It was under these circumstances in 1917 that the belligerent nations were faced with the choice between remobilization in order to secure victory or to face the grave consequences of internal unrest.¹⁷ On 9 March 1917, Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory advocated that across Devon it was the time that ‘co-operation must be resorted to in

¹⁰ PWDRO: Acc 1306/24, Diary of Edrica de la Pole, 1916, 8 December 1916, p. 343

¹¹ Adrian Gregory, ‘Britain and Ireland’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp. 408-413.

¹² Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, p. 198.

¹³ Leonard V. Smith, ‘France’ in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 424.

¹⁴ John Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”: France and Britain, 1917-1918’ in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 195.

¹⁵ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 213.

¹⁶ Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, p. 195.

¹⁷ Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘Introduction’ in I. F. W. Beckett ed., ed., *1917: Beyond the Western Front* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) pp. xiii-xv.

business nowadays, and we cannot any longer consider so much the need of any individual business as the needs of the whole country which have to come first and we must all try and do the best for the country'.¹⁸

Jean-Jacques Becker suggests that 1917 should be understood as the ‘impossible year’ which entailed the recognition within all the belligerent nations of the need for previously unimaginable sacrifices in order to ensure victory.¹⁹ According to Horne, it was these concerns over war-weariness that gave added impetus in Britain and France to undertake a second mobilization in order to maintain the fighting spirit of their combatants and the morale of their civilian populations. In both countries, the state discreetly supported the ‘social and political elites as they sought to remobilize support for the war from the spring of 1917’.²⁰ This was evident in March 1917 when the French state established the umbrella organisation of the *Union des Grandes Associations contre la Propagande Ennemie* (Union of Great Associations against Enemy Propaganda, UGACPE) to undertake a campaign of remobilization and boost morale on the French Home Front.²¹ Similarly, in Britain, Lloyd George’s war cabinet created the National War Aims Committee (NWAC) in July 1917. This Committee was, like its French counterpart, intended to ‘strengthen national morale and consolidate the national war aims as outlined by the executive government and endorsed by the great majority of the people’.²² As nominally independent umbrella organisations, both the NWAC and the UGACPE represented a ‘major attempt to remobilize opinion behind the war which drew on the underlying legitimizing values of nation and regime’.²³ Consequently, the British and French states during 1917 and 1918 became ‘involved in

¹⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 March 1917, p. 3.

¹⁹ Jean-Jacques Becker, *1917 en Europe L’année impossible* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1997).

²⁰ Horne, ‘Public Opinion and Politics’, p. 289.

²¹ David Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2012) p. 462, Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, p. 199.

²² The National Archives: T 102/16 as cited in Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, pp. 199-200.

²³ Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, p. 198.

a broad-fronted campaign to sustain civilian morale for outright military victory'.²⁴ There were also parallel efforts in Germany and Italy, in August and October 1917 respectively, to undertake this second 'patriotic' mobilization and boost national morale with the establishment of the *Vaterlandspartei* (Fatherland Party) and the *Opere Federate di Assistenza e di Propaganda Nazionale* (Federated Society for Assistance and National Propaganda).²⁵ At the same time, the United States of America entered into the war in April 1917 to which the Federal Government encouraged voluntary associations, civil society and other organisations which constituted civil volunteerism to assist in the mobilization of America's citizens for war.²⁶

This chapter examines the county of Devon from January 1917 until November 1918. Firstly, there will be an examination of the interventionist measures of remobilization that were introduced. One of these was the introduction of the Corn Production Act of 1917, which placed a greater emphasis upon farmers across Britain to grow arable food stuffs. However, the measures introduced to increase domestic food production were contested by Devon's farmers. In some cases, some of Devon's agriculturalists ignored the DWAC's entreaties and there were many who were reluctant to tolerate any intervention that they interpreted as an unnecessary interference in their working practices. Similarly, the increased demand for food was also placed upon the county's fishermen. The introduction of a system of rationing in 1917 evoked the politics of

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Richard Bessel, 'Mobilization and demobilization in Germany, 1916-1919' in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 215, Paul Corner and Giovanna Procacci, 'The Italian experience of "total" mobilization, 1915-1920' in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 228.

²⁶ Jennifer D. Keene, 'The United States' in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 512, Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. 5-8, Theda Skocpol, Ziad Munson, Andrew Karch and Bayliss Camp, 'Patriotic Partnerships: Why Great Wars Nourished American Civic Voluntarism' in I. Katzenbach and M. Shefter eds., *Shaped by War and Trade: International Influences on American Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) pp. 134-180.

sacrifice and was a form of intervention into the practices of food consumption. Nevertheless, the situation in respect to food supplies strengthened sentiments of war-weariness in Devon alongside how Devonians undertook campaigns of vigilance against perceived internal enemies in the county. In addition, the NWAC's campaign of remobilization in Devon was used by the county's elite as another means by which they could conduct and extend their superintendence of the social morality of wartime.

Secondly, there will be a consideration of the escalating demands of the MST's in Devon during 1917 and 1918. The MSA faced continual amendments which reduced the number of registered occupations in a process of 'combing out' the remaining male manpower. However, Devon's notables on the MST's faced increased criticism from the county's population and the local press. These critics main argument was that Devon's elite only paid only lip service to the war effort through their self-appointed elevated status as tribunalists. Yet, simultaneously, there was some resentment of the men and women on Devon's tribunals because they possessed an influence and authority over the life and death of many of the county's population. Consequently, Devon's tribunalists faced constant struggles to convince Devonians to sacrifice their own interests for the nation. Finally, there will be a critical investigation of local government and welfare in Devon during 1917 to 1918. Some local government bodies in Devon were hesitant over the measures that were introduced as part of remobilization and vocalized their concerns about the threat of internal upheaval. These concerns extended to the war's influence upon the socio-economic fabric of Devon which emphasized the hesitation that was felt by Devonians towards the calls for manpower and state driven totalization. Moreover, this critical investigation will also take into account how this process of remobilization affected welfare in Devon. In the light of a declining number of people located in the Devon County Asylum and the Church of

England Temperance Society for Female Inebriates at Temple Lodge in Torquay, both institutions were concerned as to how to survive during 1917 and 1918, and to navigate through the challenges of the last two years of the war.

The reason to examine both 1917 and 1918 together is that it provides an opportunity to examine the responses in Devon to the remobilization of the British war effort. Keith Grieves suggests that in 1917 ‘tractors and agricultural implements became accoutrements of national defence and “farm soldiers” were deployed as adaptable labour in total war’.²⁷ Grieves proposes it was the war preparation during both 1917 and 1918 ‘for the “end game” [that] had brought a truly mobilised home front into being’.²⁸ However, despite the apparent urgency and necessity of the measures which constituted remobilization, this chapter questions whether a truly mobilised home front came into being in Devon during this period. Instead, it is clear there were some Devonians who were oblivious of the importance of this remobilization for the ‘end game’ of victory. This suggests continuing constraints upon remobilization and the degree of friction that persisted in the relationship between Devon’s elite and the county’s population. Some of Devon’s notables struggled to convince Devonians of the necessity to accept the heightened demands of remobilization. They were self-consciously concerned for their own position and the state of the county. Instead, they advocated a multitude of ‘logics’ of mobilization to the population of Devon which were not part of the dizzying escalation of a ‘totalizing logic’ of mobilization. Moreover, the farmers of the county resented the introduction of tractors, agricultural implements and other forms of intervention in their working practices. Indeed, the disinclination of some of Devon’s

²⁷ Keith Grieves, ‘War Comes to the Fields: Sacrifice, Localism and Ploughing up the English Countryside in 1917’ in I. F. W. Beckett ed., *1917: Beyond the Western Front* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) p. 176.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

farmers to adopt these measures was because they suspected these were an unnecessary intrusion.

It can be ventured that the ‘provincial patriots’ were not wholly successful in the campaigns to convince Devonians of the necessity of the measures that were part of this second mobilization for victory. The exhortations from Devon’s elites underlined the importance of the county’s populace to undertake sacrifices that were previously unacceptable in order to achieve victory. Yet, despite these entreaties and exhortations, individual priorities modified the results of measures followed in the national interest. For some Devonians, the demands of remobilization in the pursuit of victory were in tension with the survival of their businesses and livelihoods. It is clear from the evidence from Devon’s notables that there were some who were deeply concerned about how the demands of this remobilization – including manpower and food production, were taking their toll upon Devon’s population in 1917 and 1918. As a result, some of the ‘provincial patriots’ intervened to negate the full impact of some of the decisions taken in the name of the war effort because of their concerns for the stability of the socio-economic fabric of Devon.

Interventionist measures of remobilization

According to Grieves, the Home Front in Britain during 1917 faced the test of endurance which at ‘its most obvious expression throughout the year was the “food question”’.²⁹ By the spring of 1917, George Robb suggests that Britain had reached breaking point due to shortages of food.³⁰ There was also an ‘acute shortage of basic foods’ in Devon by 1917.³¹ This was as a result of the combined factors of the poor

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³⁰ George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) pp. 81-83.

³¹ Bonnie J. White, ‘War and the Home Front: Devon in the First World War’, McMaster University, PhD thesis, 2008, p. 94.

harvest of 1916 in the Americas, France and Great Britain, along with the campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare across the Atlantic which restarted in 1917 and took a heavy toll upon the importation of overseas food supplies into the Britain.³² Therefore, it was this food question that prompted one of the key avenues of this campaign of remobilization to increase domestic food production by Devon's agriculturalists and by the county's population. Peter Dewey suggests that the measures introduced during 1917 and 1918 to improve productivity included financial inducements for cereal crops, tractors and agricultural machinery making farming a controlled industry.³³ On 8 January 1917, the DWAC decided to encourage Devon's landowners to increase domestic food production efforts in the county.³⁴ At the same time, they also urged the civilian population to participate in this campaign to increase domestic food production. During their meeting, the DWAC saw a valuable opportunity to promote growing potatoes and keeping pigs in Devon's remotest areas. To this end, DWAC members suggested that the 'services of school masters and mistresses could be utilised for encouraging villagers in this'.³⁵ In addition, the DWAC decided to take steps 'to ascertain through the Women's Registrar the probable demand for seed potatoes'.³⁶

The hope of encouraging Devonians to work together and grow more food was later expressed by the Bishop of Exeter during his 1917 Lent address. He believed that because Devon was a great agricultural county it was obvious to him that 'a great deal can be done to increase the production of food'.³⁷ Across Devon, he believed that every

³² Peter Dewey, 'Food Production and Policy in the United Kingdom, 1914-1918: The Alexander Prize Essay', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Vol. 30 (1980) pp. 71-73, Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) p. 366.

³³ P. E. Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (Routledge: London, 1989) pp. 91-197

³⁴ TNA: MAF 80/4998, Devon War Agricultural Committee, 8 January 1917, folio 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, folio 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Devon Heritage Centre: 6610, *Exeter Diocesan Gazette*, 1917-1919, 24 January 1917, p. 15.

'village could, if it minded, enlarge its garden ground'.³⁸ It was clear to Robertson that domestic food production could have a transcendent appeal across Devon's population in that 'Landlords should be ready during the war to give ground rent free for garden purposes; farmers, and especially large farmers, should make it easy for men to get manure and seed; women, yes, even children, could turn to and do a bit of digging'.³⁹ Furthermore, the educated members of the community could also become involved through the study of agriculture and with advice for the 'cultivation of plants little used in this part of the country' which would help the food supply to be increased.⁴⁰ Accordingly, under the auspices of this collective spirit, the Bishop intended to translate 'national interest into local action'.⁴¹

Yet, it was also revealed on 8 January 1917 during a DWAC meeting that women were still only employed on a 'small scale' in Devon's agriculture.⁴² Accordingly, this prompted the DWWSC to urge 'all farmers the importance of utilising to the fullest extent all the services of all women willing to work'.⁴³ Similarly, the conclusion of the DWAC towards women in Devon's Agriculture was shared by Olive Hockin, a member of the WLA. She suggested in January 1917 that the reaction of the farmers on Dartmoor to the prospect of female labour was indeed one of extreme apprehension. In fact, she suggests that Devon's farmers were extremely old-fashioned, as the sight of female farm workers had become a commonplace sight in the Home Counties.⁴⁴ Hockin underlines a possible reason for this deep condescension towards the employment of women in farming, suggesting that Devon was out of sync with the changes that were

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Grieves, 'War Comes to the Fields', p. 160.

⁴² TNA: MAF 80/4998, Devon War Agricultural Committee, 8 January 1917, folio 18.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Olive Hockin, *Two girls on the Land: Wartime on a Dartmoor farm* (London: Edward Arnold, 1918) p. 8.

evident in counties which enjoyed a closer geographical proximity to London. Indeed, she suggested that the very idea of women in agriculture was ‘greeted with sceptical and derisive laughter by the slow-moving Old farmers of Devon’.⁴⁵ White also suggests some of Devon’s farmers were ‘motivated by gender presumptions and dictates of tradition, rather than arguments based on rational efficiency’.⁴⁶

The evidence from Devon confirms this conclusion because there was both apprehension and wonder towards the prospect of women undertaking agricultural work in the county. Yet, Arthur Marwick made the suggestion that the reason as to why farmers would not employ women labour was because of their deep conservatism which made them more likely to employ school children as a substitute for manual labour rather than adult women. This, along with the scrupulous sense of finance, was the main driving force behind the decision to hire the ‘cheap labour of school children rather than pay an adult wage to women workers’.⁴⁷ However, when de la Pole heard that the farmers of the Kingsbridge Union decided that they would employ German POW’s on the land she expressed her opposition to this in her diary on 1 January 1917.⁴⁸ She believed that Kingsbridge’s farmers were ‘selfish’ for accepting the labour of POW’s and argued it would be, a ‘fatal mistake’ for these farmers as they had taken work away from local men and wages would be sent out of the country.⁴⁹ Hockin came to the conclusion that Dartmoor’s farmers were reluctant to grant a substantial wage to either male or female labour because the idea that it could be ‘anything but a favour to allow anyone, be it man, woman or child to work for ten or twelve or fourteen hours a day for the munificent daily dole of two shillings and six pence had never yet occurred to the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Bonnie White, ‘Sowing the seeds of patriotism? The Women’s Land Army in Devon, 1916-1918’, *The Local Historian* Vol. 41, 1 (February 2011) p. 17.

⁴⁷ Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 131.

⁴⁸ PWDRO: 1306/25, Diary of Edrica De La Pole, 1917, 1 January 1917, p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Devonshire agricultural potentate'.⁵⁰ Consequently, it was clear by the beginning of 1917 that the 'provincial patriots' had not convinced many of the county's farmers of the necessity to take on female labour. Rather, there were still some local notables who were critical of the conscription of farmers' sons from Devon.

During a House of Commons debate on the topic of Food Production on 8 February 1917, the Liberal MP for South Molton, George Lambert, criticised the continual requests for additional manpower by Andrew Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He asked Bonar Law that when he made these requests to withdraw agriculturalists from the land was he certain that this actually strengthened the 'food resources of the country'?⁵¹ To emphasize to the House that the Chancellor should re-evaluate his priorities towards the requisitioning of manpower, he referred to a recent incident that took place in his own parish. Two young farmers had been conscripted into the Army and were to be sent to India via Mesopotamia. Lambert was adamant that this decision to take these two men from the land was counter-productive, because in his opinion 'these two young fellows would be doing far more good by ploughing up land in Devonshire than in trying to recapture Kut el Amara'.⁵² The surrender of the British Army during the siege of Kut el Amara against the armies of the Ottoman Empire during 1915 to 1916 became regarded as a notorious failure. The fact that Lambert had evoked this event in his House of Commons speech meant that he had provided a subtle criticism of the WO's demands.⁵³ This was done to further reinforce his argument against the conscription of these two farmers, Lambert employed a stark comparison between definitive local productivity and embarrassing defeat. Indeed, this criticism was reinforced by stating that it was in the national interest for these two men to continue

⁵⁰ Hockin, *Two girls on the Land*, p. 11.

⁵¹ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 90, 8 February 1917, Column 152.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Column 153.

farming in Devon. The reason for this is that Lambert believed that these men would be wasted in attempting to recapture Kut to make up for a previous defeat. Equally, Lambert argued that it was the uncertainty as to whether agriculturalists would be called up that had hampered the productivity of Devon's farmers as you 'cannot expect any man to plant or till crops if he has not a reasonable opportunity to be able to harvest them'.⁵⁴

Lambert revealed during the debate that the capacity of the DWAC to influence and convince the county's farmers was in doubt. He had received a letter from a very active DWAC member who was the agricultural representative of Devon and who, in Lambert's view, was one of the most practical farmers in the county. Lambert believed that the War Agricultural Committees' were 'doing admirable work with the material at their command'.⁵⁵ Indeed, he applauded the DWAC because he believed that it was 'as patriotic, as well-intentioned, and earnest as any War Committee'.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Lambert told the House that the letter had conveyed to him the serious doubts of the DWAC member about the effectiveness of the organisation in Devon: 'The War Agricultural Committee of this county will, I fear, accomplish very little, first on account of the absurdly small assistance the Board of Agriculture are in a position to render to the farmer'.⁵⁷ Although the DWAC had prearranged many meetings and had appointed committees it was clear to him that 'in these days the walls of Jericho do not fall down by marching round them'.⁵⁸ However, through the use of the biblical analogy from Hebrews, it became clear that, unlike the walls of Jericho which fell by the faith and the marching feet of the people of Israel, the situation would not improve by faith

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Columns 153-154.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Column 154.

and walking around the problem. Instead, the DWAC needed to take decisive action to succeed in its advisory role to Devon's farmers.

Lambert confessed to his fellow members of the House of Commons that the DWAC member could 'have used a more agricultural metaphor by saying that plants do not spring up by walking round fields or placing advertisements on walls'.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, this conclusion had serious consequences upon the DWAC's authority to encourage Devon's farmers to dedicate more acreage to arable crops. Lambert revealed that he had asked the DWAC member what amount of corn had been tilled in Devon. He replied that Devon's farmers were not enthusiastic about increasing the amount of acreage dedicated to wheat as there was 'less wheat sown round here to-day than I ever remember, and from verbal representations, I believe, that is the case generally in the county'.⁶⁰ Certainly, he was hesitant to predict whether in the spring the acreage of corn would be made up because it was 'problematical'.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the BAF's statistics reveal that the acreage of corn that was harvested in Devon during 1917 was 47,892 acres.⁶² In comparison, the corn acreage in Devon recorded for 1916 was 49,032 acres, a reduction of 1,140 acres.⁶³ However, this does not represent a significant reduction in the amount of wheat that was grown in Devon especially when the acreage for 1917 is cross-examined against the 45,182 wheat acres that were grown in Devon in 1914.⁶⁴ It is probable that Devon's farmers had sown wheat during the spring of 1917 to make up for the shortfall from the bad harvest of 1916.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, '[Cd. 9006, 9089, 9163] Agricultural Statistics for Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom, 1917', <<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>>, [Accessed 21 January 2009].

⁶³ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, '[Cd. 8436, 8559, 8870] Agricultural Statistics for Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom, 1916', <<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>>, [Accessed 21 January 2009].

⁶⁴ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, '[Cd. 7926, 7954, 8112, 8152] Agricultural Statistics for Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom, 1914', <<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>>, [Accessed 21 January 2009].

Yet, in early 1917 there were clear difficulties in acquiring food in Devon's urban localities. This was reflected in a letter to Dollie Hammond from Mabel Hammond dated 27 February 1917. Mabel confessed that it was such 'an awful trouble to get food' in Exeter.⁶⁵ She went on to clarify this by saying that the 'only thing that we have a trouble to get is meat'.⁶⁶ These difficulties to gain food were also evident in Plymouth. F. Ashe Lincoln recounted that the situation surrounding rationing and food supplies in the city was 'quite drastic'.⁶⁷ However, Lincoln's grandfather was a 'fortunate possessor' of farms on Dartmoor which meant that Lincoln could go to Dartmoor and 'get ample supplies of dairy products and so on'.⁶⁸ Similarly, during early 1917 the populations of London, Paris and Berlin experienced significant difficulties to gain food. The lack of availability of meat in Paris prompted the price for meat (steak) to significantly rise from 132 Francs in the previous year to 210 Francs.⁶⁹ Thierry Bonzon and Belinda Davis reveal in the spring of 1917 that 'Parisian workers, particularly women workers, expressed their growing anger at the newly introduced policy of freeing prices from controls'.⁷⁰ They suggest that the evolution of food prices in London confirm that 'meat prices rose more steeply than any item except sugar'.⁷¹ Consequently, the progressive introduction of rationing in Paris was 'intended to deflect open revolt over the surge in prices'.⁷² Mabel recorded in the letter her belief that the food situation in Exeter would 'be a lot better when this rationing comes in next month'.⁷³ However, she suggested that the difficulties of getting meat into Exeter would

⁶⁵ DHC: 4478M/F1, Letter to Dollie Hammond from Mabel Hammond, 27 February 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ University of Leeds: Liddle Collection, DF 148, Recollections relating to the Domestic Front: Transcript of Tape 916, Lincoln, F. A., 15 July 1993, p. 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Thierry Bonzon and Belinda Davis, 'Feeding the cities' in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 319.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 332.

⁷³ DHC: 4478M/F1, Letter to Dollie Hammond from Mabel Hammond, 27 February 1917, p. 2.

not be immediately resolved because the amount of meat that they would receive ‘won’t be very much when we do get it next month’.⁷⁴ In his diary entry for 12 April 1917, Arthur Thompson, the Vicar of the mid-Devon village of Ide revealed that food prices generally had increased by 50%. Thus, under the newly introduced system of rationing each person was allowed ‘4lbs of bread, ¾lb sugar & 2½lbs of meat a week’.⁷⁵

Subsequently, other Devonians decided to take matters into their own hands in order to attempt to increase domestic food production. On 2 March 1917, the *Western Morning News* reported upon the efforts of Mrs Symons, a Totnes resident, who proposed to grow potatoes in the unused plots of the consecrated ground in the cemeteries of Totnes and Tiverton.⁷⁶ This move was controversial from the outset, but the group decided to take matters into their own hands and grew potatoes in every plot of land including consecrated ground. It was reported by the correspondent that the Burial Board of Totnes had supported Mrs Symons’ application to grow potatoes in the cemetery because of the serious shortage of potatoes. The Board believed that these potatoes should be sold at ‘such prices as may help the local market and assist the poor who lately have had few and altogether may go without in future’.⁷⁷ Consequently, the Bishop of Exeter had reluctantly to concede to Mrs Symons request, for which he made this exception on the grounds that ‘David ate shrew-bread’.⁷⁸ He emphasized that for Mrs Symons to grow these potatoes, they needed to be used to feed the underprivileged in Devon: ‘I think that [in this] case all the food that is grown must be given away to the poor, but I would much rather that it should not be cultivated’.⁷⁹ Therefore, through this emphasis, the Bishop took the opportunity to use this concession to extend his authority

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ DHC: 1857Aadd5/PI8, Diary of Arthur Thompson, vicar, 1908-1996, 12 April 1917, p. 48.

⁷⁶ *Western Morning News*, 2 March 1917, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

as an arbiter of morality in Devon. Previously, on 22 February 1917, a Brixham inhabitant had put forward a similar unorthodox solution to the problems of food supply in the *Western Guardian*. He suggested that there should be widespread collection of seagulls' eggs as a worthwhile alternative source of food.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, despite the ingenuous responses of some Devonians to the crisis of food supply, there were other residents of Devon who sought to exploit the crisis of food supplies.

During a meeting of Okehampton Town Council on 7 April 1917, Colonel E. H. Holley, the Mayor, revealed that he was concerned about the town market. It had become swamped with an increased number of traders who purchased these goods and sent them to Britain's urban centres in order to take advantage of the increased demand for and the higher price for food in these locations. Holley was resolute that it was the wealth and war bonuses present in Britain's cities that had enticed and enabled these traders to sell the local produce at large profits.⁸¹ This meant that the traders who bought these local food stuffs reaped the large profits of selling them at higher prices and the producers who brought their goods to the town market were short changed in this lucrative but immoral business. The comments made by Okehampton's Mayor tapped into the representations of the profiteer which, as Jean-Louis Robert has revealed, stressed a critical and ethical opposition between the profiteer and the consumer that tapped into the cultural codes of the wartime morality.⁸² Consequently, Holley was adamant that these traders had reduced the food supplies on offer at Okehampton's market which had consequently meant that the town's population faced the decision to either go without

⁸⁰ *Western Guardian*, 22 February 1917.

⁸¹ DHC: 3248A/13/76, Okehampton Town Council Meeting, 7 April 1917, item 4.

⁸² Jean-Louis Robert, 'The image of the profiteer' in J. Winter and J-L Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 104-132.

food or ‘pay through the nose [for food]’.⁸³ This anger against these profiteers was motivated by hunger but they were also appalled by the greed of these individuals.

Nevertheless, there were other depictions which focused the blame for the food crisis against farmers for selling their products to the highest bidder. For instance, *The Herald* on 6 February 1917 published a caricature which presented a ‘young worker feeding “war profits” to British farmers, under the title “A little child shall feed them”’.⁸⁴ It was these representations of traders and farmers alike, stories published in the local press and rumours disseminated on a local level which fuelled the popular attacks on the farming community.⁸⁵ Hockin states that the food shortages in Devon during 1917 had meant that the hungry were finding targets to blame for their lack of food. Farmers were repeatedly targeted and allegedly accused of hoarding food for themselves and their families. However, Hockin reveals that if ‘all farms were like ours, and had, owing to the shortage of labour, reduced their potato acreage to less than half, and with disease rampant in addition, it is little wonder there was scarcity’.⁸⁶ It was also suggested that Devon’s food sellers, such as butchers, made fantastic profits from the scarcity of food items.

A food producer group who were very important in the supply of meat were the rabbit trappers of Devon. The shortage of meat across the belligerent nations had meant that there was a dramatic rise in the price of meat.⁸⁷ Hence, the large quantities of rabbit meat proved to be an effective solution to the decrease in the amount of meat in Devon

⁸³ DHC: 3248A/13/76, Okehampton Town Council Meeting, 7 April 1917, item 4.

⁸⁴ Robert, ‘The image of the profiteer’, p. 120.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Hockin, *Two girls on the Land*, p. 116.

⁸⁷ L. Margaret Barnett, *British Food Policy during the First World War* (Winchester, MA: George Allen and Unwin, 1985) pp. 36-37, Bonzon and Davis, ‘Feeding the cities’ pp. 305-341, Richard Perren, ‘Farmers and consumers under strain: allied meat supplies in the First World War’, *The Agricultural History Review* Vol. 53, 2 (2005) pp. 212-228, Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany, Freiburg, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 160-163, 172-174.

during 1917 and 1918. At the Torquay Tribunal on 16 November 1917, a Brixham rabbit trapper claimed that he had trapped over 2,000 acres and caught 19,000 rabbits'.⁸⁸ This appeal by the Military was rejected.⁸⁹ However, during the hearing for farm hand, pig keeper and slaughterer Wm. Norman at the Northern Panel of the DAT on 29 November 1917, Norman revealed to the tribunal panel that he also 'caught rabbits for the farmers at £1 a hundred'.⁹⁰ This prompted Stirling to reply that under this arrangement Norman received a shilling for every five rabbits that he caught. Yet, the consumer had to pay a significantly increased price. It was suggested that some retailers in the North Devon town of Barnstaple charged up to 4s. 2d. for two rabbits.⁹¹ It was also revealed by other members of the Northern Panel that other men in the district were paid 27 s. 6d. for a hundred whilst others received 30 shillings for the same quantity.⁹² It became clear that some butchers and rabbit catchers in Devon saw an opportunity to charge rabbit meat at a similar high price as other meat products. Captain Stirling tapped into these comments when he argued, that what the public had to pay for rabbits was 'iniquitous'.⁹³ Moreover, he claimed that in Barnstaple 'rabbits were as plentiful as mulberries when the prices were high'.⁹⁴ However, since the price for rabbit meat by 25 January 1917 was fixed the supply had subsequently gone down and rabbit meat was 'practically unobtainable'.⁹⁵ He then asked where these rabbits had gone. In response, the chairman suggested that some Devonians had caught these rabbits and placed them into cold storage. This is a plausible suggestion as there were some individuals who wanted to store rabbits in cold storage and wait until the price of rabbits increased.

⁸⁸ Imperial War Museum: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Daily Mercury*, 16 October 1917.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 29 November 1917.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 25 January 1918.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

The issue of food provoked a sense of discord and, in part, contributed to manifestations of war-weariness in Devon. An example of how the prices of food had helped to create instances of war-weariness was when Cecil Torr spoke to an elderly resident from the Dartmoor village of Lustleigh about the war in 1917. He complained that it ‘be a terrible thing, this war. Proper terrible it be’.⁹⁶ Indeed, the reason behind this was that he had never ‘knowed the price of bacon to be so high’.⁹⁷ This discussion about the war, prompted another elderly resident nearby to add his opinion, what ‘be the sense of their contendin? Why us in Lustleigh don’t wage war on they in Bovey [Tracey], and wherefore should the nations fight?’⁹⁸ Consequently, the increase in food prices and the shortage of certain food items did contribute to a sense of weariness about the war and in this case undermined the validity of the conflict. A similar manifestation of war-weariness was noted by Hockin in June 1917 in the conversation between four local notable figures. When Hockin’s employer, Maester (sic), was asked by Billy Withecombe about his opinion on the war, Maester replied in a profound comment that ““O-o-oh—ay. … Well. … They’m *fightin’!*””⁹⁹ Peter Whidd’n, a local thatcher, added to the conversation that ““They du tell as they Germans be a-sinkin’ all our ships,””¹⁰⁰ Yet, Arry ‘Ickey (sic) chimed into the conversation to state that ““Tis toime it stopped, that it be,”” and ““Let them as made the war go out and fight, that’s what I says. It bain’t no workin’ man’s warr.””¹⁰¹ At this Peter Whidd’n (sic) answered to agree with ‘Ickey’s point that ““Let them as wants it goo an’ fight.””¹⁰² After Whidd’n gave this contribution, Withecombe then enquired from Maester whether it was true “that you

⁹⁶ Cecil Torr, *Small talk at Wreyland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918) p. 63.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Hockin, *Two girls on the Land*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

beant allowed to sell your wool?'.¹⁰³ When Maester confirmed that this was indeed the case because of the prohibition of the selling of wool in 1916, it prompted Withecombe to reply that it was time that the war “‘wur stopped, so it be, [because it was] interferin’ on a man’s own farm”.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Hockin offers an interesting reflection upon the nature of the isolated nature of the communities on Dartmoor; incidents such as these were typical of the ‘war echoes that reach our Dartmoor uplands’.¹⁰⁵ However, Hockin makes a bold statement that builds upon this reflection to which she suggests that some of Dartmoor’s farmers were oblivious to Britain’s participation in the war due to the remoteness of this particular part of Devon. Instead, these Dartmoor agriculturalists were more concerned with their own individual survival: ‘Verily, until the famous prohibition of wool-selling in 1916, I believe the farmers hardly knew their own country was involved’.¹⁰⁶

The trapping of rabbits also proved to be a convenient arrangement for Devon’s arable farmers who complained that they were a pest and destroyed their crops. This was reflected in the application by rabbit trapper Alfred John Nicholls on 25 January 1918 at the Northern Panel of the DAT. According to the *Western Morning News*, there were several famers in the North Devon district of Berrynarbour who supported Nicholls appeal because without his intervention to trap rabbits it would be ‘useless planting corn’.¹⁰⁷ In an interesting turn of events, Captain Stirling the military representative for the northern panel suggested that if the tribunal could not ‘help the Army it could at least help the people by seeing that the rabbits were put on the market’.¹⁰⁸ During the proceedings, Mr Metherell revealed that the District’s Food Production Committee had

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 25 January 1918.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

'sent him special instructions to support the cases of trappers where he thought they were needed'.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, Metherell considered that this man, who had caught nearly 5,000 rabbits on four farms last season, was 'absolutely indispensable'.¹¹⁰ The chairman of the DAT delivered the verdict that Nicholls would be granted exemption until 15 May 1918 when they would review what he was catching around that time. Accordingly, Nicholls was instructed that he must bring before the tribunal on 15 May a 'statement of his monthly catches'.¹¹¹

Another appeal by a rabbit trapper was submitted to the DAT on 26 January. In this appeal it was claimed that 'rabbit trapping was urgently necessary in this man's district at present, and while dismissing the appeal they would ask the military not to call him until March 15'.¹¹² However, one of the tribunal panel replied back that he should refocus his energies for rabbit catching to use in the military, as after the rabbit trapper was called up he hoped that the 'man would take his traps with him and go and catch Germans'.¹¹³ However, there were other tribunals in Devon who considered rabbit trapping to be a skilled occupation that should not be stopped.¹¹⁴ This was reflected in the appeal of Wm Tucker on 21 February 1918 who had his exemption until June 1 upheld by Northern Panel of the DAT when he revealed that he caught an average of '200 to 500 rabbits a week'.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the dilemma of the competing demands of the Home Front and the military created a tension amongst Devon's elite on the DAT. During the appeal of Albert Piper, rabbit trapper and smallholder of Dowland on 27 March 1918, the Chairman of the Tribunal argued that Piper should not be granted

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 21 February 1918.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

exemption because the military position was ‘far more serious than it was 12 months ago’.¹¹⁶ However, Mr J. M. Metherell argued that Piper should be granted exemption because the food position was also at that present time more serious.¹¹⁷ After Piper’s exemption was upheld, Captain Stirling reacted to the verdict in a bitter and disappointed tone, that no ‘other country would think of leaving a general service man to trap rabbits’.¹¹⁸

At the same time, Devon’s farmers and rabbit trappers were not the only ones to experience difficulties during 1917. In November 1916, the Brixham fishing fleet was attacked by German U-Boats in Lyme Bay which resulted in the sinking of two fishing vessels.¹¹⁹ On 4 January 1917, the threat of attack by U-Boats lingered in the minds of the DSFC. Mr Windeatt enquired about the issue of compensation for those who had lost their vessels in the attack. The DSFC’s Clerk responded that this was a question related to war risk to which ‘all the inhabitants of the country were liable’.¹²⁰ Viewed in this light, it is difficult to calculate what claim could have been made legally on behalf of Brixham’s fishermen. Mr Windeatt retorted that he did not specifically use the word legally. He felt that money was being taken from the local insurance society’s fund for cases which ‘surely the Government in some way ought to meet’.¹²¹ Capt. Manley argued that it was a question as to whether the Brixham society could take the war risk. Mr Sanders revealed that the insurance at Brixham covered ‘75 per cent of the value of the vessels lost, the owners having to bear the other 25 per cent’.¹²² Sanders tried to reassure the DSFC in order to gain a perspective in that ‘their losses, however, in

¹¹⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 27 March 1918.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ David Bilton, *The Home Front in the Great War: Aspects of the conflict, 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2003) p. 198.

¹²⁰ DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, *Western Morning News*, 4 January 1917, p. 70.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

connection with the war were as nothing compared with those at Lowestoft'.¹²³ Finally, it was decided on 23 August 1917 that compensation was to be offered by the BT to 'merchant crews who lose their effects through vessels being torpedoed or otherwise sunk as an act of war'.¹²⁴ This was also offered at a fixed rate to fishing vessels.¹²⁵ However, the issue of compensation and insurance continued to be an important issue for Brixham's fishermen. Samantha Little suggests that every Brixham fishing vessel sunk by German submarines further 'diminished the contributory capital and increased monetary responsibility for remaining members of the Fishing Smack Insurance Society, whose director faced serious monetary loss'.¹²⁶

After the attack, the Admiralty re-imposed strict regulations upon Start Bay. Despite this, some fishermen continued to break the Admiralty's regulations by trawling in the area. By fishing in these prohibited waters, these fishermen were accused of illegal fishing and were perceived to be breaking the law for their own profit. This meant that both fish buyers and sellers were accused of being unhelpful to the war effort and reaping large profits.¹²⁷ Indeed, whilst this practice was taking place, the *Western Guardian* reported that at Brixham fish market in May 1917 'business was held as usual'.¹²⁸ Lt. Turnor appreciated the necessity to provide food for Devon's population but this was not a justification for 'breaking the law'.¹²⁹ This led to several members of the DSFC to argue that:

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, *The Western Guardian*, 23 August 1917, p. 87.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Samantha Little, *Through cloud and sunshine: Brixham and the Great War* (Brixham: Brixham Heritage Museum, 2008) p. 43.

¹²⁷ DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, *Western Morning News*, 22 September 1917, p. 89.

¹²⁸ *Western Guardian*, 31 May 1917.

¹²⁹ DHC: R2360Aadd2/Z14, Devon Sea Fisheries Newspaper Cuttings, *Western Morning News*, 22 September 1917, p. 89.

We had an enemy all around our coasts seriously interfering with the food of the nation ... The cumulative effect of all this justified the magistrates in taking a different view of the cases to what they would [do] under ordinary conditions.¹³⁰

Subsequently, several civil litigation cases were brought to the courts against the fishermen who had broken the Admiralty's regulations. In their defence, they complained that they were misled by a notice posted in Brixham which stated that fishermen were allowed to fish in Start Bay and had misinterpreted the new regulations.¹³¹ They argued that the lifting and reintroduction of measures in Start Bay were unclear and confusing. The chairman said that the Bench of the Totnes Magistrates Court had 'great sympathy with the fishermen on the coast, who had done an enormous amount of good by their pluck'.¹³² However, as Magistrates they had to reluctantly come down on the Admiralty's side and inflict fines upon 'those who had broken those regulations'.¹³³ Although these fines would not be heavy in this instance, the Admiralty threatened and then issued heavier fines in the hope that this would deter illegal fishing in Start Bay. However, it can be argued that as the war threatened the survival of their livelihoods as fishermen, a fine was not a sufficient deterrent to change their fishing practices. This argument is supported in that through 1917, the numbers of prosecutions against Brixham's fishermen continued at a steady pace and indicates that they intended to take advantage of the wartime prices of fish and capitalise upon these difficult times. However, it is clear that outside of Devon's fishing communities there was little patience for their plight.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

When the Corn Production Act (CPA) received Royal Assent on 21 August 1917, it represented a significant turning point for Agriculture and the domestic food supply of Great Britain. The act stipulated that there would be a guaranteed price for wheat and oat yields which was hoped to be an incentive for British farmers to grow more arable crops. In addition, the Agricultural Wages Board was established to supervise increased wages for Agricultural workers. However, this attempt to induce Britain's farmers to increase their acreage of arable food stuffs was not always welcomed by agriculturalists. The CPA's implementation across Great Britain raised serious questions concerning the complications of implementing the changes put forth in the legislation. It was revealed during a meeting of the Executive Committee for the NFU on 18 September 1917 that the DFU had received several complaints from farmers in Devon against the implementation of the CPA. DFU representative, Mr Willing called attention to a circular which had been issued in Devon, which appealed the county's farmers to plough up 30 per cent of their grass land acreage for the production of corn or potatoes. He revealed that Devon's farmers considered this request was a 'drastic measure, and not exactly in order, and wished to know whether agricultural committees had such power'.¹³⁴

Willing went on to stress that the legislation would not find much support amongst the county's farmers because 'Devonshire was not exactly a corn-growing county, but more a pastoral and milk-raising county'.¹³⁵ This meant that due to the nature of farming within the county it was 'quite impracticable [for Devon's farmers] to comply with the order'.¹³⁶ This would indicate that, despite the intention of creating connections between the local and the national levels, in the hope to increase productivity, there was great

¹³⁴ University of Reading Special Collections: National Farmers Union Archive, AD1.2, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 18 September 1917, p. 53.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

confusion between the two. During the meeting, Willing revealed that he had received two replies from other NFU Executive Committee members who stressed that the DWAC had no authority to ensure Devon's farmers' total compliance with the order.¹³⁷ This supports the statements made by Lambert in the House of Commons in February 1917 about the DWAC's authority to ensure the involvement and conformity of Devon's farmers with wartime directives. Bonnie White has also revealed that whilst the 'conditions of war eventually necessitated the coordination of local and national efforts, such cooperation was slow to materialize in Devon'.¹³⁸ Furthermore, Lambert's statement reinforces Jonathan Brown's suggestion that many of Britain's farmers resented the 'government's efforts to increase the arable acreage'.¹³⁹

Christopher Scoble states that it became evident to Reynolds that the unending process of recruitment of fishermen into the Navy provided him with a 'continuing source of anxiety and criticism'.¹⁴⁰ This is reflected in a letter to Maurice dated 8 December 1917 where Reynolds put forward his belief that people in London did not understand the sacrifices that had been made by Westcountry fishermen. Reynolds asked Maurice to recall the misery that he had experienced when he witnessed the fishing fleets in the South West under his jurisdiction 'whittled away from below'.¹⁴¹ Despite this, Reynolds went to great lengths to emphasize that he was an important mediator able to calm the tension between the fishermen, and the authorities: 'you know how I have intervened to ease the trouble down, and how I have fought for men to man Westcountry boats'.¹⁴² This statement also presents the fact that Reynolds was a keen advocate to protect the

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Jonathan Brown, 'Agricultural Policy and the National Farmers' Union, 1908-1939' in J. R. Wordie ed., *Agriculture and politics in England, 1815-1939* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000) p. 183.

¹⁴⁰ Christopher Scoble, *Fishermen's Friend: A Life of Stephen Reynolds* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2000) p. 639

¹⁴¹ Stephen Reynolds, *The Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. by Harold Wright (Richmond: Hogarth press, 1923) p. 291.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

interests and livelihoods of Devon's and Cornwall's fishermen. However, this work to preserve Devon's fishing industry had not gone un-criticised. Reynolds revealed that he had been the 'target of cheap gibes' which had been 'flung at me the London end, with its invisible ignorance of what things mean to country people's and family's lives'.¹⁴³ In addition, Reynolds believed that this criticism of him was not confined to London and government policy makers.

The status of Reynolds as the ISWF had made him the 'most powerful person in the fisheries of the west [which had] put him in the firing line of the inevitable resentment as if he had been the recruiting master himself'.¹⁴⁴ He claimed that he had become deeply unpopular in Devon due to the unfairness of the Naval system of recruiting and his support for the county's fishermen. Conversely, he asserted that he had carried out government instructions for Devon's fishermen with the greatest of efficiency. Subsequently, he was treated with great suspicion and thereby 'earned the enmity of the provincial patriots'.¹⁴⁵ This accusation indicates that there were some local notables in the county who viewed with hostility Reynolds' efforts to protect the manpower of Devon's fishing industry. Notwithstanding his efforts to defend the interests of fishermen as a special interest group, Reynolds believed that he had also become an ostracised figure even amongst Devon's fishermen. This was because of the fact that he had not 'escaped the opprobrium of the people in whose interests I was acting'.¹⁴⁶ According to Reynolds, both Devon's and Cornwall's fishermen had 'not been able to see the rationale of the calling up'.¹⁴⁷ He further confessed in this letter that he often

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Scoble, *Fishermen's Friend*, p. 639.

¹⁴⁵ Reynolds, *Letters*, p. 291.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

was unable to ‘find no rationale’ for the calling up of fishermen and that the unbalanced process was at its best ‘bound to be a clumsy process’.¹⁴⁸

It was this emphasis upon domestic food supply during 1917 that led to requests from both Barnstaple and Bideford town councils to extend the fishing season of the river Taw as a wartime measure. Sir John Fryer, the superintendent of fisheries within the BAF, opposed the scheme. He thought that to fish during the Salmon close season for rough fish even as an emergency measure, with the plea of increasing the local food supply during the War, was not one which in his view ‘should be entertained’.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it appears that Fryer was in the minority because other members of the Board of Conservators (BC) of the river Taw defended the case to extend the season. W. P. Martin believed that the BC’s should firstly understand that the extension was ‘purely as a Wartime measure’.¹⁵⁰ Secondly, Martin advised that they should consider the importance of the ‘present National Emergency with regard to food supplies’.¹⁵¹ Another member, J. S. C. Davis, seconded Martin’s resolution on account of the food shortage which had been referred to in ‘two letters which the Board had received from the Barnstaple Rural and Barnstaple Urban Food Control Committees, which, he contended, were sufficient justification for the resolution’.¹⁵² Davis emphasized that it was the ‘duty of every public body and individual to do everything possible to increase the food supply of the country’.¹⁵³ However, not all of the BC agreed to extend the season under the auspices that this wartime measure would increase food supplies.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ North Devon Record Office: FB5/1, Minute book for the Board of Conservators in Taw and Torridge, 1909-1923, 12 October 1917, p. 215.

¹⁵⁰ NDRO: FB5/1, Minute book for the Board of Conservators in Taw and Torridge, 1909-1923, 1 February 1918, p. 238.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, fellow member of the BC, W. C. D. Jurnall opposed the proposal to extend the fishing season on the grounds that it would be not increase the ‘food supply to those who needed it’.¹⁵⁵ Jurnall stressed that this suggested measure would severely damage the river Taw and would only increase a surplus of Salmon, which at 4/- a pound would only ‘be a luxury for the well-to-do and probably be an addition to their usual rations’.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, this would suggest that in the name of increased food production, the increased fishing quotas would not benefit the general food supply for the country. It is clear that some BC members intended to profit from the inflated wartime prices for meat in a time of austerity. However, Jurnall argued that whilst he would support the resolution from a personal standpoint he intended to ‘oppose it from the point of food supply’.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the BC’s Chairman pointed out that if ‘food supply was as bad as some of the speakers had intimated, drastic action should be taken by those in authority’.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the Chairman claimed that salmon stocks could be as easily ‘replenished as Pheasants could be’.¹⁵⁹ The resolution was passed 13 to 7.¹⁶⁰ As a consequence of extending the fishing season, the board members decided to increase the number of patrols to watch the river at night.¹⁶¹ On 12 April 1918, the BAF accepted the BC’s resolution.

Nonetheless, the BC stressed that the fishermen who fished the river Taw should be ‘duly warned that the relaxations in enforcement of the existing regulations were to be regarded only as a special measure to meet war conditions’.¹⁶² For the fishermen, this relaxation could not be considered as a justification for the ‘alteration of statutory

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 12 April 1918, p. 242.

regulations'.¹⁶³ This was to be a similar case with Devon's sea fishermen and the regulations regarding Start Bay. The BC did not want river fishermen to use the wartime measures as a pretext to permanently alter the existing regulations for fishing. In addition, the BAF expressed a great sense of appreciation to the BC's for taking this step to 'increase the nation's food supply'.¹⁶⁴ However, the BC's decision to extend the season did not increase the quota of salmon. It was recorded in Gregory's quarterly report for 12 July 1918 that in spite of the earlier season there 'were poor catches of salmon both with rods and nets up to May and even up to the present time the season was much poorer than previous years',¹⁶⁵

After the winter of 1917, the situation surrounding the supplies of food became worse with food shortages and a further escalation of food prices. The Vicar of Ide described in his diary entry for 10 May 1918 that the situation for meat had worsened in the village. This was due to the fact in 1918 meat was purchased with coupons issued by the Food Controller, Lord Rhondda.¹⁶⁶ He also revealed that he was able to buy 10d. worth of meat and the same of bacon. Indeed, he stressed that as prices were high this was a 'very small quantity'.¹⁶⁷ Notwithstanding these food shortages, the Reverend suggested that with the village's population there appeared to be no famine or want because 'all get an equal share, from the highest to the lowest'.¹⁶⁸ The vicar believed that it was important for Devonians to continue to endure the great burdens of the war. However, this attitude was on the condition that as long as these burdens were equal and applied to everyone.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the food shortages and high food prices in Britain did

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12 July 1918, p. 245.

¹⁶⁶ DHC: 1857Aadd5/PI8, Diary of Arthur Thompson, vicar, 1908-1996, 10 May 1918, p. 51.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

heighten ‘working-class resentment and disenchantment with the war effort, especially when this hardship was coupled with an awareness of social contrasts’.¹⁷⁰

Although the donation of individual food stuffs continued to be a popular form of philanthropy amongst many of Devon’s residents, the introduction of rationing had changed the politics of food donations. This was evident in February 1918 when the Devon County Horticulture Committee (DCHC) proposed to create the Devon Garden Produce Society (DGPS). The DCHC intended that the DGPS should deliver the donated agricultural produce of Devon towards the war effort. Its founders believed that the productivity of Devon’s gardens could provide a reliable source of extra produce across the country. However, despite the understandable appeal of the DGPS’s activities, its formation provoked a number of different issues. The second point of the notes for the formation of the DGPS, revealed the members natural concerns about its focus. One anonymous member was cautioned that there should not be an assumption that there would be a ‘surplus of vegetable produce this year?’¹⁷¹ Indeed, he believed that both bread and meat were going to be short in Devon, so would ‘not those who have vegetables be glad to eke out their rations with them?’¹⁷² In light of the austerity created by the war, the situation in respect to food supplies in Devon was in a constant state of flux. The society’s critics considered that past experience was not ‘a reliable guide as to what [food] there may be to spare in [the county in] the future’.¹⁷³

It became apparent that some Devonians considered the donation of food to the armed forces as counter-productive, not only to the war effort but also to the county’s food

¹⁷⁰ George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p. 82.

¹⁷¹ DHC: 1262M/L130, Bundle of correspondence re Welfare, pensions, rehabilitation, Notes on Scheme for Devon Produce Society, Feb 1918, p. 1.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

requirements. This is evident in another point that was raised in that the DGPS ought to have been closed because food items which included fruit had ‘been a great boon to the seamen, but they are really a luxury’.¹⁷⁴ The member claimed that the Admiralty could surely oversee that rations were ‘adequate for health and physique’.¹⁷⁵ Certainly, to consider that since rolling stock was in short supply, it would be wasteful in his view to ‘send green stuff from the West of England to the North when a few gallons of limejuice would for medical purposes be [as] equally effective’.¹⁷⁶ This reveals that there was a distinct tension between the dual needs of the Home Front and the military, especially in light of the hardships that Devonians were experiencing in obtaining food. This reveals that the Devon populace felt a sense of priority for the needs of Devon and the Home Front rather than the military. This observation was shared by the DCHC. They noted that Devon during 1918 had benefitted from a surplus of produce and the DCHC stressed that other parts of Britain were ‘in need of such produce, notably the consuming centres of South Wales’.¹⁷⁷ After a period of negotiation in April 1918, it was decided that the DGPS should be formed with Fortescue as its President.

According to Dewey, the supply of potatoes expanded considerably during the last two years of the war as the ‘new food production policy got into its stride’.¹⁷⁸ The introduction of the Potato Order of 1917 in September 1917 was intended to dramatically increase potato production across Great Britain. Certainly, this did contribute in part to the boost towards potato production in Devon from 1917 into 1918. In 1918 there were 19,892 acres dedicated to potatoes in the county when compared to

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ DHC: 1262M/L130, Bundle of correspondence re Welfare, pensions, rehabilitation, Devon County Horticulture Committee – suggested to form Devon Garden Produce Society Ltd, April 1918, p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ Peter Dewey, ‘Nutrition and living standards in wartime Britain’, in J. Winter and R. Wall eds., *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 204.

13,496 acres of potatoes recorded in 1917.¹⁷⁹ This 6,396 acre increase was represented through the efforts of Devon's farmers to increase potato acreage. Indeed, local government bodies in Devon also responded to the calls for increased potato production. One example of this was when West Alvington Parish Council (WAPC) decided to increase potato production in the parish on 30 May 1917.¹⁸⁰ In order to accomplish this, WAPC believed that they should purchase a potato sprayer upon the recommendation by the BAF.¹⁸¹ However, by April 1918, there were strong indications that WAPC had suffered bad experiences with the potatoes. As a result, WAPC unanimously decided to 'send a strong protest to Earl Fortescue on the manner the Parish has been treated with reference to Seed Potatoes'.¹⁸² Nevertheless, in light of the fact that potato disease was rampant during 1918 it was understandable that there were problems to grow potatoes not just in West Alvington. Similarly, Paignton Urban District Council (PUDC) had 'instituted a drive for the cultivation of allotment gardens and seed potatoes' in early 1918.¹⁸³ In March 1918, there were 285 allotments in 12 fields across Paignton when compared with 98 allotments before 1914.¹⁸⁴ However, due to the fact that there was potato disease in 1918, PUDC instituted a spraying drive in the town's allotments and private gardens. Subsequently, by May 1918, PUDC had cultivated land which totalled 100 poles planted with potatoes and 2 ¼ acres of corn.¹⁸⁵ Notwithstanding the efforts made by local authorities and the endeavours of individual Devonians to increase the amount of arable food stuffs, in 1918 it was mainly up to Devon's farmers to dedicate more of their permanent grass for the growth of arable crops. However, the evidence

¹⁷⁹ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, '[Cd. 9006, 9089, 9163] Agricultural Statistics for Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom, 1917', <<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>>, [Accessed 21 January 2009], House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, '[Cmd. 13, 298, 375] Agricultural Statistics for Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom, 1918', <<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>>, [Accessed 21 January 2009].

¹⁸⁰ DHC: 1122A/PP1, Minutes of West Alvington Parish Council, 1901-1940, 30 May 1917, p. 111.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 15 April 1918, p. 115.

¹⁸³ F. Ralph Penwill, *Paignton in Six Reigns: Being the History of Local Government in Paignton* (Paignton: Paignton Urban District Council, 1953) p. 82.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

from Devon's archives, it would suggest that the productivity of Devon's farmers was compromised due to a shortfall in both manpower and the number of plough horses which had been commandeered for use in the Army.

By 1918, according to Alan Armstrong, there were 127 WLA girls in Devon compared to 3,801 part time/full time women workers on Devon's farms.¹⁸⁶ This diminished from 176 in 1917 to 122 in 1918.¹⁸⁷ From a review of the statistics, it is clear that the county's farmers during 1917 and 1918 did turn, more often than not, to other sources of manpower to work on the land apart from the WLA. Instead, farmers employed large numbers of POW's and soldiers. The numbers of the former increased dramatically from 375 in 1917 to 1,175 in 1918.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, a substantial number of soldiers were employed by farmers during these two years. Indeed, there were 2,433 and 2, 593 soldiers for 1917 and 1918 respectively.¹⁸⁹ This, along with White's research on the WLA in Devon, indicates that the county's farmers were more concerned about the reliability of labour to work on all the necessary but gruelling tasks of farming.¹⁹⁰ In 1918, there were only 707 plough horses remaining in Devon compared with the 1,325 plough horses in 1917.¹⁹¹ The only alternative open to Devon's farmers to replace this lost horse power was with the introduction of the tractor and to embrace the mechanisation of their work practices. Nevertheless, the introduction of tractor ploughs provided the county's farmers with 'no end of trouble'.¹⁹² However, Earl Fortescue suggests in his memoirs that it was the tractor's novelty which meant that it was unsuccessful with Devon's farmers because 'no one really knew how to build them and

¹⁸⁶ Alan Armstrong, *Farmworkers in England and Wales: A Social and Economic History, 1770-1980* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988) p. 164.

¹⁸⁷ DHC: 1262M/L140, Labour Officer's Report, 17 April 1918.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ DHC: 1262M/L140, Labour Officer's Report, 17 April 1918.

¹⁹⁰ White, 'Sowing the seeds of patriotism?', pp. 13-27.

¹⁹¹ DHC: 1262M/L140, Labour Officer's Report, 17 April 1918.

¹⁹² DHC: 1262M/FH/42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 45.

they had to learn how to manage them when built'.¹⁹³ Hence, he concluded that these tractors 'cost much money and were a doubtful success' to Devon's agriculturalists.¹⁹⁴ It could be argued that the county's farmers did not intend to use the tractor to replace the labour that they had fought so hard to keep. Devon's Farmers remained unconvinced by the introduction of a new piece of machinery, the benefits of which appeared to be outweighed by the negatives. These sentiments were encapsulated in a poem by Catherine Whetham entitled 'The Tractor'. In the poem, she presented the arrival of tractor as a troublesome piece of machinery which was greeted with despair in the county to the extent that its technical experts would like to have placed a ban on it.¹⁹⁵ She centred the guilt for all the continued problems that were associated with the tractor on Rowland Prothero, the BAF's President from 1916 to 1919, whom she believed was vain and deluded in attempting to introduce the tractor in Devon.¹⁹⁶

Before 1914, Great Britain imported 93% of Britain's lumber requirements from nations such as Russia and Canada. It was calculated that timber 'occupied between one-seventh and one-eighth of the total shipping entering the country' for 1914 and 1915 respectively.¹⁹⁷ Britain required substantial quantities of timber for fuel and the maintenance of the vast network of trenches on the Western Front. However, due to both unrestricted submarine warfare and the continual loss of shipping by German U-Boats, these shipping routes for imported lumber were cut off and thereby the British war effort, suffered a severe shortage of timber. In his study of English forestry, N. D. G. James argues that lumber in fact held the same importance as coal and iron for the

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ C. D. Whetham, 'The Tractor' in C. D. Whetham ed., *An Exeter Book of Verse* (Exeter: Elland Brothers, 1919) pp. 37-39.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ E. G. Richards, *British Forestry in the 20th Century: Policy and Achievements* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) p. xxxiii.

economic survival of the country through the conflict.¹⁹⁸ It became clear that Britain had to fulfil its timber requirements from Britain and the wood from Devon's forests was harvested for the war effort. From 6 May 1915 until February 1917, the EDC had an agreement with the WO to ferry fuel wood from Exmouth dock onto vessels that would then ship this lumber to Boulogne.¹⁹⁹ However, to fulfil these lumber requirements for the war effort, it was evident that there needed to be a large workforce to fell and process the timber.

The workforce comprised many different agencies and individuals. Included in this was the Canadian Forestry Corps which comprised of Canadian lumberjacks across four camps in Devon.²⁰⁰ A subdivision of the WLA known as the Women's Timber Corps (WTC) was also involved in the felling and transportation of wood in the county. In particular, the activities of this organisation were heavily promoted in both the local and national press as examples of women's work for the war effort. *The Illustrated War News* published an article on 15 August 1917 which promoted the activities of the WTC. The two illustrations in this article presented the members of the WTC in Devon as supervisors of the work of Portuguese tree fellers, which included measuring the timber for the fellers to cut.²⁰¹ Likewise, *The Daily Mirror* presented a similar article on 17 September 1918 about the WTC felling timber in Devon.²⁰² This discussion of forestry was understood as a prime example of war-work and displays the transformation of labour from previously male dominated industries. Hence, the

¹⁹⁸ N.D.G. James, *A History of English Forestry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) p. 210.

¹⁹⁹ DHC: 6039B/M2, Minutes of the directors meetings, 1914-1920, pp. 150-208.

²⁰⁰ C. W. Bird and Lieutenant J. B. Davies, *The Canadian Forestry Corps: Its Inception, Development and Achievements* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1919) pp. 7, 33, DHC: 3830M/F12, Diary of Dorothy Holman, August 1916 – June 1917, 7 April 1917, DHC: 3830M/F13, Diary of Dorothy Holman, June 1917 – February 1918, 4 August 1918, 7 August 1918.

²⁰¹ *The Illustrated War News*, 15 August 1917, p. 35.

²⁰² *The Daily Mirror*, 17 September 1918, p. 8.

promotion of felling timber in organisations such as the WTC helped to further present the patriotism of Devon's women and claim wartime citizenship on the Home Front.

The task of felling timber in Devon was also undertaken by Portuguese nationals.²⁰³ During the war, the British Army turned to thousands of foreign nationals for employment in Britain and France on tasks related to the war effort.²⁰⁴ These included the felling of trees, digging of trenches and the repair of the road networks.²⁰⁵ In Devon, after 10 May 1917, Portuguese nationals were employed as a labour force by the Army Council at a lumber camp in the West Devon village of Halwill. Subsequently, a case was brought against 15 Portuguese timber fellers at the camp by the BT. They were charged with breaking regulation 2b of DORA. All of the fifteen workers pleaded not guilty to the accusations charged against them.²⁰⁶ According to BT inspector, Thomas Crown, the defendants had refused to work at the camp and had done no work for several weeks.²⁰⁷ In addition, they had also threatened other men who were willing to work. In their defence, the Portuguese labourers argued that they were taken away from their usual work because some of them were carpenters they did not enjoy felling timber.²⁰⁸ However, their main grievances against working in the camp were that they did not have sufficient food within the camp and they did not enjoy working under the Portuguese foreman.²⁰⁹

²⁰³ Richard Broad, *Dunkeswell: Parish and People* (Dunkeswell: Richard Broad, 1994) p. 63, DHC: 3830M/F13, Diary of Dorothy Holman, June 1917 – February 1918, 17 August 1918.

²⁰⁴ Xu Guoqi, *Strangers of the Western Front: Chinese workers in the Great War* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011) p. 1, 38-54.

²⁰⁵ John Starling and Ivor Lee, *No Labour, No Battle: Military Labour during the First World War* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2009) pp. 21-76.

²⁰⁶ NDRO: 178B/P/8, Peter, Peter & Sons of Holsworthy, Case book, 1912 – 1925, 22 January 1918, p. 194.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Yet, it would appear that the defendants did not exaggerate the working conditions in the camp. In the solicitor's case notes, he reported that in January 1918, there were 98 people working at the lumber camp and 94 men in the camp's workforce had fallen ill.²¹⁰ Moreover, it was revealed that the camp outside Halwill was quite expensive to operate. It actually cost fifty per cent more to run than some of the other lumber camps in England. As a consequence of this set-back in productivity, it was estimated that 100 tons of timber were delayed.²¹¹ At the hearing's conclusion, each man was fined £2 and sentenced to fourteen days hard labour. However, it would appear that the cold treatment of Portuguese labourers working on timber sites in Devon was not uncommon. Later in 1919, the BT paid compensation to Portuguese labourers employed at a lumber camp in the North Devon village of Filleigh.²¹²

As mentioned previously, the management of the JHC textile factory negotiated with the lacemakers over the introduction of female labour. Another factor that prompted a series of negotiations between the factory's management and workforce was the issue of war bonuses. On 2 April 1917, the factory's management decided to double the existing war bonus for the factory's employees. In addition, the company created a war bonus for pensioners working at the factory. This provided '1/6 a week to men and 1/- to women'.²¹³ It was these difficult conditions that led to an application from the MCL on 16 January 1918 requesting an increase of 3/- per 100 racks advance in their rate of pay.²¹⁴ The reasons for this request included, the 'present high prices of food and other commodities; and alleging inter alia that they had had no rise in the last fifty years

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² TNA: T1/12318, Board of Trade. M.N. dos Santos, decd., and J. Concalves, decd., Portuguese labourers, Timber Supplies Department, Kineton, Glocs., and Filleigh, Devon, respectively: compensation to dependants, 1919, p. 1.

²¹³ Tiverton Museum: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900 – 1929, 4 May 1917, p. 190.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 January 1918, p. 190.

(sic)'.²¹⁵ On 21 January 1918, Ian and Ludovic Heathcoat-Amory presided over a meeting with the lace-hands. According to the secretary taking the notes of the meeting, Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory's speech alluded, in a very sympathetic way to the 'difficulties of living owing to [the] high prices and [the] shortage of food'.²¹⁶ Thus, the management granted the '3/- per 100 racks in advance which the men had asked for, as "a temporary way of getting over a temporary difficulty"'.²¹⁷ At the same time as this, the lace foreman received an advance of 10/- per week as well.²¹⁸ However, these advances subsequently had an effect upon the sum that was to be divided equally amongst the JHC's partners.

During the 1918 co-partners meeting, the sum that was divided amongst the partners was £16,060.²¹⁹ According to Heathcoat-Amory, this sum had been reduced because of the money the firm had to provide following the requests for increases of pay from the workforce.²²⁰ However, the original sum had been a lot better than they had expected for that year. Therefore, Heathcoat-Amory remained optimistic. In his speech for the co-partnership meeting, he stated that the factory's workforce had 'put a spirit of cheeriness and joy into their work that carried them from an output of 1100 a week into an output of 2,000 a week'.²²¹ It was this productivity that had made the 'Government inspectors wonder why the people in other shops they inspected couldn't be as cheery'.²²² In fact, Heathcoat-Amory stressed that through 'anxious and difficult times we have remained a happy little family in this factory'.²²³ Furthermore, he advocated that both the management and the workforce should go on 'working and hoping - and let us as

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21 January 1918, p. 190.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ TM: 88/1158/1, J. Heathcoat-Amory factory Logbook, 1900 – 1929, Copy of Ian Heathcoat-Amory's speech, 21 January 1918, p. 2.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

prudent people practice every reasonable economy now in the National Interest as well as our own'.²²⁴ Hence, through an association of the broader picture of the national interest with their efforts in the factory, the local output of the factory's workforce and the national interest were presented as one.

In his study of the NWAC, David Monger suggests that the NWAC's propagandists deployed 'a complex and flexible narrative informed by pre-war patriotic motifs but adapted to the requirements of a war-weary civilian society'.²²⁵ During the last fifteen months of the war, the NWAC's work to remobilize morale in Britain was extensive. Under its remit, the NWAC 'held thousands of meetings and distributed over one hundred million publications, propagating a wide-ranging and flexible patriotic message reflective of the total-war environment in which civilians found themselves'.²²⁶ During 1917 to 1918, a torrent of government-backed advocacy in Britain through the NWAC's activities 'reinforced the efforts of private societies and war-loans campaigns to resist a premature peace, while authorities inhibited expressions of dissent'.²²⁷ In Devon, like other parts of England and Wales, Monger revealed that various speakers for the NWAC often dwelt on the special qualities or achievements of a locality in the hope that this would stimulate communal pride.²²⁸ For instance, during a War Aims Committee (WAC) meeting in the North Devon town of Combe Martin the Conservative candidate for Barnstaple, C. S. Parker, promoted Combe Martin's accomplishments both in terms of recruiting and war-work. At the same time, Liberal candidate for Barnstaple, Lieutenant Tudor-Rees stressed to members of the audience

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²²⁵ David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012) p. 13.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²²⁷ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, p. 467.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

that he was with the ‘grandeur of the scenery’.²²⁹ He went on to praise the unique beauty of the North Devon coastline with a comparison to the landscape of Australia. To an Australian co-speaker at the same meeting, Tudor-Rees argued that if ‘all the scenery of Australia could be rolled up and gathered into one it would not compare for a moment with the beauty of the scenery between Combe Martin and Ilfracombe’.²³⁰ This statement was received with applause and laughter. Furthermore, this evocation of the idyllic qualities of English landscape which represented Devon’s countryside as a green and pleasant land was also used in the North Devon village of Woolfardisworthy by Bryan O’Donnell the Conservative speaker who was a replacement for C. S. Parker. In O’Donnell’s speech, he said that all Britons ‘would rise with indignation at the thought that the hordes of Germans should ever ruin the fair lands of Devonshire or any other county’.²³¹ According to Monger, O’Donnell also provided a similarly gendered image of Britain which tapped into the sentiments which were part of the atrocity propaganda. He advocated to the audience that they should be prepared, whatever the cost, to protect the women of Britain so that they should be ‘spared the sufferings of the women of Northern France, Belgium, Poland, Serbia and Montenegro’.²³²

In this complex and flexible narrative there were continual references to ‘an expanding community extending through the family, workplace, locality, nation and beyond, linked by the willing acceptance of duty’.²³³ Another example of this was evident at a WAC meeting in Exeter on 14 December 1917 when James Owen claimed that patriotism in Exeter was evident because the old city ‘was firm for the war, and meant

²²⁹ *Ilfracombe Chronicle*, 3 November 1917, p. 3 as cited in *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *North Devon Herald*, 8 November 1917, p. 3 as cited in Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain*, p. 116.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain*, p. 9.

to go on with it'.²³⁴ Despite the fact that it was not a WAC meeting, Sir Auckland Geddes, the Minister of National Service visited Plymouth on 13 November 1917 with a similar appeal to the patriotism of Devon and the county's Naval tradition. He addressed the crowd to state that if he were a Devon man, he would be 'proud of Devon's soldiers and I know I would be prouder still of Devon's sailors'.²³⁵ However, the NWAC's activities in Devon also provided an extension of the authority of Devon's elites to superintend the patriotism of other Devonians. The meetings of the WAC in Devon also gave the 'provincial patriots' licence to enhance their roles as moral arbiters of the social morality of wartime with the dissemination of specific representations and ideas. During the WAC meeting in Exeter on 14 December 1917, the Conservative MP for Exeter, Henry Duke, argued that people of Exeter should continue to remember that the war was a spiritual conflict, 'a war from which there was no deliverance till it is through'.²³⁶ The moral imperative of Britain's position on the side of Right against German Might was an important factor in Duke's rhetoric to persuade the Exeter audience that they should be steadfast in and ready to make greater sacrifices for the support of the war. Indeed, Duke stressed that the great challenge that Exonians had to overcome was the fact that the 'German people had raised for themselves – raised it deliberately – a Frankenstein. Either they must be delivered from it, or the Allies must come under its heel'.²³⁷ By referring to Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, Duke intended to depict the German military machine as a monstrous creature which like Doctor Frankenstein's creation would bring untold and rampant destruction upon the world. Moreover, the fact that Duke had chosen to characterise the military machine of Germany in this manner helped to strengthen the idea that it was an aberration of nature that needed to be vanquished. Similarly, the monstrous nature of the

²³⁴ *Western Times*, 15 December 1917, p. 2.

²³⁵ *The Times*, 13 November 1917, p. 3.

²³⁶ *Western Times*, 15 December 1917, p. 2.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

enemy evident in depictions of the German was also noted in the Vicar of Ide's diary entry for 12 April 1917 where he describes a recent item of news which stated that the Germans were using the corpses of their own men and enemies to provide 'fat for glycerine for munitions'.²³⁸ The Vicar believed that this action was "“thoroughness” with a vengeance".²³⁹ Paul Fussell suggests that this supposed dreadful act along with the conjecture that there was a German Corpse-Rendering Works were devised as atrocity rumours to further accentuate the despicable nature of the enemy.²⁴⁰ It was the suggestion of this sinister act that helped to reassure the Vicar that he had to endure great pains to stop acts such as these which epitomised German tyranny.

The application of a diabolical overtone to the image of the German was also evident in a WAC meeting in Barnstaple on 26 October 1917 when Lord Fortescue addressed the crowd regarding the topic of pacifists. He believed that there were three classes of pacifist in the country. Firstly, there were pacifists who were simply fools. Secondly, some pacifists were secretly in league with the Germans and received German pay.²⁴¹ Thirdly, there were pacifists who were degenerates. It is important to note that Fortescue employed the use of immoral characteristics to define the despicable nature of the wicked pacifist. According to Monger, this was a point that was further 'endorsed by the town's prospective parliamentary candidates, C. S. Parker and the Liberal Lieutenant J. T. Tudor-Rees'.²⁴² Both of the men made it clear to the Barnstaple crowd that the pacifist had a hidden hand which was tarnished with blood. They were resolute that if any British man had anything to do with that blood-stained hand then he ought to be stripped of his citizenship in the wartime community and 'not to be allowed to enjoy

²³⁸ DHC: 1857Aadd5/PI8, Diary of Arthur Thompson, vicar, 1908-1996, 12 April 1917, p. 48.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 116-117, *Punch*, Vol. 152, 25 April 1917, p. 267.

²⁴¹ *North Devon Herald*, 1 November 1917, p. 1 as cited in Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain*, p. 133.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

British rule and [its] privileges'.²⁴³ Accordingly, they should become ostracised figures to which they should be immediately deported to where they would be treated as 'Germans had always been'.²⁴⁴ The comments of Fortescue, Parker and Tudor-Rees tapped into the criticisms that had been launched against pacifists' in the county.

In light of the moral codes of the wartime social morality, both the pacifist and the CO, seemed to represent a significant threat to the war effort. Indeed, like the instances of war-weariness, they seemed to represent an insidious threat to not only the war effort but also to the stability in the county. This was evident with the political CO's housed in Dartmoor prison at Princetown. The upheaval of the Russian Revolutions of 1917 added new and significant credibility to the idea that war-weariness threatened the stability and progress of the war effort of all the belligerent nations.²⁴⁵ In fact, both the February and October Revolutions in Russia had given the British state significant concerns because the political discontent with the war and industrial unrest present in Britain could also produce similar internal upheavals.²⁴⁶ In his letter to *The Times* on 8 October 1917, Archibald Robertson, the Bishop of Exeter, warned that Dartmoor prison had become a 'hotbed of malcontents'.²⁴⁷ He extended his criticism of the government in their decision to imprison a large number of CO's, both political and religious, in one location. In his opinion, this was a foolish decision because it enabled a political CO to convert a religious CO to 'his revolutionary ideas, or, at least, to get from him the countenance and support that comes of his religious character'.²⁴⁸ From this inferential reading, it was clear that the spread of these individuals' revolutionary ideals had the potential to cause a rise in radical anti-war sentiment in Devon.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Gregory, 'Britain and Ireland', pp. 410-411.

²⁴⁶ Brock Millman, *Managing Domestic Dissent in First World War Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 2000) pp. 206-209.

²⁴⁷ W. Exon, 'Anarchic Dartmoor: A Hotbed of Malcontents', *The Times*, 8 October 1917, p. 10.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Yet, in his letter to *The Times*, Robertson defended those who had decided that they would not fight or participate in the war effort for religious reasons. He believed that the religious CO should ‘be sought out wherever he is, whether in prison or in the settlement, and treated as a good citizen with fanatic views’.²⁴⁹ To Robertson, it seemed unjustifiable to ask religiously minded individuals to undertake activities which would go against their religious principles. No man or woman had requested the ‘Mahomedan to eat pork, or the Hindu to kill the sacred cow, and so no sane man would suggest that either a Quaker or a Christadelphian or any other Nonconformist pacifist should have anything to do with the war’.²⁵⁰ Consequently, they should be released from their incarceration. He proposed that for individuals to treat a political CO and a religious CO as both one and the same was unmerited. Indeed, in Cecil’s words there was nothing so unjust as to treat ‘Marat and John Bunyan as people of similar opinions’.²⁵¹

It is clear that the Bishop thought the best way to emphasize the differences within the dual nature of CO’s was through the reference to specific historical precedents. The comparison of the religious CO to John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, helped to accentuate the peaceful and religious character of these individuals. However, the association of the political CO with the French revolutionary, Jean Paul Marat provided a more dangerous evocation and suggests that the French Revolution was now haunting the minds of contemporaries. This event, like the October revolution in 1917 in Russia, had uncontrollably escalated into widespread anarchy and civil disorder throughout France. However, the title of Robertson’s letter ‘Anarchic Dartmoor’ also provided a more sinister evocation of the anarchist. By labelling the political CO’s as

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

anarchists, the Bishop played upon the fears associated with the destruction and amoral activities of anarchist groups and individual anarchists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁵² Anarchists and anarchist groups had become seen as a dangerous phantom which lurked in the shadows to overturn and destroy law and order. Thus, within the framework of this representation, the individuals who were political CO's seemed to possess a chaotic intent which threatened to destabilise the war-effort. This meant that the Bishop argued that the political CO should 'surely deserve a different treatment'.²⁵³ In fact, the Bishop suggested that political CO's should be relocated from Dartmoor to other areas of England which were regularly visited by German aircraft.²⁵⁴ Consequently, political CO's should be treated and understood in a revolutionary context because they were 'enemies to our commonwealth, and they should be required, like enemy aliens to report at the police stations of those districts where their labour would prove profitable to the community'.²⁵⁵

Nevertheless, it was clear to Robertson that the labour of these individuals should be harnessed for the good of the war effort. Accordingly, he believed that the feeling towards these individuals was extremely bitter throughout Devonshire's agricultural sector: 'the Government are feeding these men, who refuse to do even the primary duties of a peaceful citizen, namely, to secure the food supply of the nation'.²⁵⁶ Moreover, the Bishop was suggesting that the CO's incarceration in Dartmoor Prison was not a prison sentence but instead a pleasant holiday. They could enjoy Dartmoor's beautiful scenery without 'even a khaki man to reproach them or a wounded man to shame them, while the poor farmer tries in vain with the few men that are left to garner

²⁵² Alex Butterworth, *The World That Never Was: A True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists and Secret Agents* (London: Vintage, 2011).

²⁵³ W. Exon, 'Anarchic Dartmoor: A Hotbed of Malcontents', *The Times*, 8 October 1917, p. 10.

²⁵⁴ Albert Marrin, *The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1974) p. 160.

²⁵⁵ W. Exon, 'Anarchic Dartmoor: A Hotbed of Malcontents', *The Times*, 8 October 1917, p. 10.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

the sheaves which the constantly returning rain is causing to rot'.²⁵⁷ In order to place a greater emphasis upon the selfishness of CO's, he said that the reason that they decided to refuse to help with the bad harvest of 1917 was because of the fact that 'their rations are safe, and they only need to do the comparatively light task that they are set'.²⁵⁸ Accordingly, the Bishop claimed that their idleness at Princetown had contributed to the failure of the harvest which was 'rotting in the fields and which could have been saved had there been an adequate supply of labour to profit by the few hours of sunshine which we have had'.²⁵⁹

It would seem that the Bishop was not alone in his opinions on this matter. A. E. Clarke, the President of the Bible Brotherhood, sent a letter on 13 October 1917 to *The Times* in reply to the Bishop's letter. Indeed, he went further than the Bishop and suggested that all CO's housed in Dartmoor prison were 'would-be fomenters of revolution'.²⁶⁰ To the CO's and their sympathisers, Clarke ventured forth with the wisdom in that: "'Philosophers and world-menders are too apt to forget this. Their plans are laid for a race of logical, reasonable, faultless creatures, but they must be worked out by a seething, struggling rabble capricious, weak, and roguish schemers and dreamers, whose principles are wax, whose blood is hot, and whose very breath of life is folly'".²⁶¹ In his letter, he also compared the political CO's incarcerated in Dartmoor Prison to the French political radical Jean-Paul Marat as well as the Bolshevik revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin.²⁶² Clarke continues to reference the important relevance of the situation in Russia. Clarke employed Russia's revolutionary situation to influence the reader that this would place the war effort and the Home Front into a

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ A. E. Clarke, 'The Dartmoor Anarchists', *The Times*, 13 October 1917, p. 8.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² *Ibid.*

perilous situation. He questions whether one could describe political CO's as being conscientious at all. In fact, they were the destructive disciples of Marat or Lenin, who followed the defiant creed that: “Our lips are our own. Who is lord over us.”²⁶³ In his concluding statement, Clarke directly quoted from the Bishop's letter, to offer a rhetorical question to his reader: ‘incidentally, might not these striking words be engraven also, now, in every coign of vantage in Russia?’²⁶⁴ Consequently this incarceration of CO's brought problems and aroused powerful emotions, within patriotic and sympathetic audiences.

Tribunals under strain

Despite the calls for remobilization from Devon's elite there were some Devonians who continued to place their own priorities above those of the nation. This was evident during the deliberations of the tribunals in Devon during 1917 and 1918. Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory, a DAT Chairman, suggested on 14 April 1917 that Devon's tribunalists must take this opportunity to issue a ‘serious warning to the county that the national need was so great that individuals must be prepared to forget themselves to remember only what the country required’.²⁶⁵ However, as documented in chapter 3, the members of Devon's elite who made up the tribunal panels in Devon faced some criticism of their conclusions. During 1917 and 1918, the criticism of the tribunalists over their decisions concerning the distribution of manpower in Devon became more fervently expressed. An example of this was after the failed appeal against military service of Leopold Blackmore, a twenty-two year old cattleman on 10 April 1917. According to the correspondent for the *Western Morning News*, the father of Leopold who disapproved of the Tribunal's verdict to deny his son exemption sought to upset the

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 April 1917.

tribunalists when he declared his hope that ‘after that England would starve’.²⁶⁶ The Tribunal’s Clerk replied back to this defiant statement on behalf of the tribunal saying that ‘we hope you will be here to starve with us’.²⁶⁷

Nevertheless, tribunalists in Devon had to experience continued disaffection from residents in the county due to the fact that the priority of some Devonians was to preserve their own businesses in wartime. This was reflected in the appeal of Harold Tucker, a director of Tucker & Sons Jam Manufacturers at the Plymouth Panel of the DAT on 7 May 1917. Despite the fact that Tucker was granted an exemption until 1 June 1917, Tucker stated that the business was ‘in the middle of our annual stock taking’.²⁶⁸ This statement from Tucker which emphasized the inconvenience that this temporary exemption would cause to his business prompted the recorder of Tiverton, Sir Trehawke Kekewich, to reply that ‘we are in the middle of the biggest war ever known’.²⁶⁹ It is clear that the survival of the jam manufacturers through 1917 was of greater urgency to Tucker than military service. This is not say that Tucker was unpatriotic but rather that for him to be called up would be an inconvenience to the manufacturer’s priorities during stock taking and further jeopardise his future in the firm. A similar conflict of interest of trade versus the army arose during a meeting of the Plymouth Appeal Tribunal at the appeal of tailor’s presser William John Mitchell. Lieutenant Stirling agreed that ‘from the local point of view the business was important, but from the national point of view Mitchell should have gone into the army long ago’.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 10 April 1917.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 8 May 1917.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Yet, there were also accusations that the proceedings of Devon's tribunals were not conducted in a solely judicial manner. In the appeal of Percy Glanfield on 24 August 1917, the solicitor who represented Percy appealed to the Central Tribunal because he claimed that he could not gain exemption from military service until September 30 1917. The chairman of the Torquay Tribunal, F. J. Crocker had noted in the newspaper reports that a substitute was offered but this had not been mentioned at the tribunal. Mr J. Glanfield complained that 'so far as the offer of a substitute was concerned, this was not done until after the appeal had been sent forward to the Central Tribunal'.²⁷¹ It seemed to him to be unprecedented that additional evidence was 'put forward after a case had been once sent up for appeal'.²⁷² Indeed, whilst J. Glanfield had nothing to say against Percy, he suggested that it 'ought to be known that he only passed his final examination in June last, and that his only experience had been as an article clerk to a solicitor'.²⁷³ Therefore, he argued that the 'methods adopted by the military authorities in this case were improper and unEnglish'.²⁷⁴ In fact, J. Glanfield was certain that the Tribunal had 'not only exceeded their duty, but had dealt with the business in a manner that was absolutely unconstitutional'.²⁷⁵ This criticism also extended into the proceedings of CO, Sidney Linscott. According to the correspondent for the *Western Morning News*, Linscott did not attend the proceedings of the Exeter Panel of the DAT to defend himself. Instead of appearing before the tribunal panel, he had written a letter to explain the reason behind his absence. The letter contained a declaration from Linscott which expressed his consideration that 'local men are more competent to deal with local applicants and their affairs than a conglomeration of agrarian gentlemen'.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 24 August 1917, p. 6.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 20 October 1917.

Indeed, he argued that this was especially true of the Exeter County Tribunal because they were incapable to provide an impartial and unbiased judgment in cases brought before them concerning CO's.²⁷⁷ It would be disingenuous to suggest that Devon's tribunalists, like those of Northamptonshire, possessed the innate wisdom of the Biblical King Solomon.²⁷⁸ The reason for this was that human perspectives and the social morality of wartime did influence the consideration of the appeals of CO's in Devon.²⁷⁹ It is important to note that the correspondent for the *Western Morning News* judged Linscott's accusation to be a slur against the Central Panel. Therefore, the perception of the tribunals in the county and in particular the perceived prejudices of tribunalists were hard phenomena to ignore. In addition to this criticism, there was also condemnation of the Plymouth Appeal Tribunal (PAT). On 3 July 1918, the Tavistock branch of the DAT passed a resolution which declared that the composition of the PAT was such that 'agricultural cases did not receive proper consideration, the majority of the members having no practical knowledge of agriculture'.²⁸⁰ Whilst the Tavistock branch did not want to impeach the general character of the individuals on the PAT, they were concerned when one tribunalist enquired the difference between arable and pasture land.

The PAT consisted of 'one solicitor, one barrister (not in practice), one lady, one draper, one printer, one clay-worker, one retired draper, one parson's son, and one farmer'.²⁸¹ The Tavistock Tribunal believed that the PAT should include one extra farmer and Mr Abbott the agricultural member of the PAT seconded this idea because he 'had a very hard time in opposing his colleagues, who thought any old man could do the work on a

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ James McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-1918: 'A very much abused body of men'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) p. 157.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 6 July 1918.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

farm'.²⁸² In most decisions, the PAT had sided with their military representative 'who, being a smart man, drew them to his side'.²⁸³ Abbott confessed that the previous decisions of the PAT were 'shameful'.²⁸⁴ He had endeavoured without success to 'impress his colleagues that farmers could not afford to spare every able-bodied man' and there were other criticisms against the PAT.²⁸⁵ Previously, on 24 April 1917, Lieutenant Stirling had regarded the 31 appeals at the PAT during the previous week as an 'indication that the tribunal system in this part of the country had failed'.²⁸⁶ He hoped that in the course of the day they 'would wipe out the black mark against the tribunal system in the district that so many young men should be left in civilian employment'.²⁸⁷ Similar criticisms about the exemptions granted by the Barnstaple Tribunal and the Okehampton Tribunal were also addressed in the local press.²⁸⁸

In the case for Okehampton's Tribunal, the Exeter panel of the DAT decided on 3 May 1918 to reverse the decisions of Okehampton's Tribunal for the previous week. Captain Stirling remarked that he was 'sorry to have to appeal against so many decisions of this Tribunal, but they did not seem to realize the importance of men to the Army'.²⁸⁹ However, it was this idiosyncratic approach towards appealing for exemption from the conscription process that tested the patience of some tribunalists in Devon. This was evident after a meeting of Bampton Tribunal on 30 July 1918 when the members of the

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 7 July 1917, IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 22 October 1917, IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 4 May 1918.

²⁸⁹ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 4 May 1918.

tribunal panel resigned en Bloc.²⁹⁰ The Chairman of Bampton Tribunal, Mr. Tucker, intimated that he could no longer serve on the Tribunal because the work of the Tribunal ‘seemed to be completely nullified by other agencies’.²⁹¹ In his defence, he put forward several cases as instances where ‘both the Local and Appeal Tribunals had ordered men to serve on certain dates but these men were still in civil life, with either vouchers or protection certificate’.²⁹² As a consequence of the inconsistent approach towards exemption, Tucker felt that he could ‘no longer be a party to such proceedings’.²⁹³ Other members of the Tribunal endorsed the views of the chairman on this principle and it was decided that they tendered their ‘resignations forthwith’.²⁹⁴ It was evident that Tucker’s resignation and the other tribunalists of the Bampton Tribunal touched upon a dilemma that many local tribunals in Devon had to encounter. The fact that the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the decisions made by these local tribunals was continually contested by the other agencies helped to undermine the authority of Devon’s elite in their specific localities.

It is clear that the sensitive nature of the appeal cases which were reviewed had taken its toll upon the members of Devon’s elite, who were on the tribunal panels. Kekewich revealed on 31 May 1918 that it was an ‘unpleasant duty they had to do on the Tribunal’.²⁹⁵ In the 6,500 cases that the DAT had considered, he confessed he had never come ‘across a farmer’s case without going away with an aching heart’.²⁹⁶ At the same time, he expressed the fact that their hearts ‘also ached for the boys at the front, and he

²⁹⁰ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Express and Echo*, 30 July 1918.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 31 May 1918.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

knew the farmers of Devon would do their best to support the lads at the front'.²⁹⁷ Earlier on 14 April 1917, Heathcoat-Amory declared a similar admission about the emotional burden of the public duty and the jurisdictional responsibilities as the DAT's Chairman. He believed that in the consideration of cases on the DAT it was 'so difficult to do what was right to the country and at the same time to do what was fair to individuals'.²⁹⁸ Yet, there were some Devonians who argued that the tribunals provided the county's elite with a means to extend their status as notable citizens in the county.

On 1 February 1918, a letter was published in the *Western Morning News* on the subject of the members of the PAT. It was written under the synonym of 'Plymothian' and he suggested that 'what an exceptional opportunity this war has afforded to so-called public men to conclusively show their claim to such a title by simple example, which in these days is worth so much more than any precept, of which we hear far too much'.²⁹⁹ However, 'Plymothian' asserted that if the war is to be won, it 'must be by individual self-sacrifice and not mere lip service'.³⁰⁰ This suggestion emphasises how Devon's public men could authenticate their influence upon local affairs and expressively display their patriotism through the meetings of local tribunals. Moreover, these comments were in a similar vein to the observation made by Reynolds about the nature of Devon's elite in wartime. Indeed, Reynolds defined them as the 'provincial patriots' who were the self-appointed judicators of patriotism in the county, measuring the patriotism of others against their own patriotism.³⁰¹ The Plymothian's statement could equally be read as a vindication of how the county's elite sought to superintend the patriotism of others

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 14 April 1917.

²⁹⁹ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 1 February 1918.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ Reynolds, *Letters*, p. 291.

through the deliberations of reviewing individual cases for exemption against military service.

Nevertheless, the criticism of the tribunals and tribunalists in Devon continued. The *Western Morning News* published a lengthy note on 22 August 1918 as a response to the torrent of criticism of the DAT and the Cornwall Appeal Tribunal. According to the anonymous author, some of this condemnation against the Appeal Tribunals was unjustified. However, he believed that the ‘temper which provokes it has unquestionably been aroused by the Appeal Tribunals themselves’.³⁰² He made the assertion that the women and men of the DAT were in fact forced to undertake this task because of the ‘haphazard way in which the Appeal Tribunals were constituted’.³⁰³ Therefore, this meant that these local notables were ‘pitchforked on to a bench and told to hear appeals’.³⁰⁴ Notwithstanding all the faults of the local Tribunals in Devon, the author claimed that at least they did have ‘some sort of representative status’ of their respective communities.³⁰⁵ Yet, by contrast, he declared that the DAT had no representative status at all. Despite the fact that many of the county’s elite on the DAT felt that their role as tribunalists gave them a sense of public duty, the author claimed that there was no authority to which the DAT owed any responsibility. In fact, they were ‘dealing with a vaguely worded instrument of law, complicated by a discord of constantly varying “instructions”’.³⁰⁶

He went on to propose that Devon’s prominent citizens on the DAT were ‘often utterly out of touch with the realities of industrial and domestic life in the districts whose fate

³⁰² IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Western Morning News*, 22 August 1918.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

they settle'.³⁰⁷ In his view, these men and women on the DAT only paid lip service to the war effort as part of their duty as tribunalists, because they were only required to 'sit for an hour in one of their sessions to perceive that in many cases they are utterly unsuited by knowledge or temperament for this exceedingly difficult and delicate work'.³⁰⁸ Accordingly, this meant that the men or women who 'really do know something of the matters with which they are dealing are easily outnumbered'.³⁰⁹ The author argued that Tribunal members could be effortlessly swayed in their considerations because some stubborn or aggressive person would dominate the rest.³¹⁰ Such was the case with Linscott's suggestion of the PAT, where it was 'bombarded by pertinacious "military representatives" whose discretion is infrequently equal to their valour'.³¹¹ Although they were not excessively un-judicial in their judgments and their comments, he claimed the DAT had 'created an atmosphere of resentment and hostility' which was not a benefit for the public.³¹² Consequently, he suggested that for future reference the tribunalists on the DAT should be a 'good deal more modest and very much more consideration of the judgements of the local tribunals whose work they review'.³¹³

Local Government and Welfare

Local government was the conduit and arbitrator of the British state in the Edwardian period.³¹⁴ For those who administered the machinery of local government, its various services carried notions of individual duty and social progress for the liberal

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989) pp. 461-484.

intelligentsia to advance ‘civilisation’.³¹⁵ During the war, the responsibilities of local government were heightened.³¹⁶ Alongside the public duty of municipal housekeeping, local government agencies were also responsible for implementing directives which were intended to assist in the war effort. Devon’s local authorities were also encouraged to invest in War Loans which were ‘less onerous than taxation for the donors who could expect their money back in time at a satisfactory rate of interest’.³¹⁷ The third War Loan, otherwise known as the 5 per cent War Loan, was launched in February 1917. However, there were local government authorities in Devon who were not convinced to invest in a war loan in 1917. For example, HRDC on 10 February 1917 voted by a majority of five members to two not to invest any money in a War Loan.³¹⁸ Notwithstanding this decision of HRDC, these investments proved to be a popular form of economic mobilization in the county. The Town Clerk for Exeter, Mr Lloyd Parry, noted that the 5 per cent War Loan was very popular amongst the city’s population. In fact, Parry recorded that the ‘enthusiasm with which this was received and taken up in the City exceeded all expectations’.³¹⁹

According to the Clerk, a great campaign was started that was intended to educate the general public ‘concerning this loan and to influence subscriptions to it’.³²⁰ This campaign was concise across Exeter ‘information bureaus were set up and several public meetings were held addressed by the Mayor and other influential citizens’.³²¹ Indeed, a personal appeal from James Owen was distributed to around ‘1,000 residents

³¹⁵ Peter Mandler and Susan Pedersen, ‘Introduction: The British Intelligentsia after the Victorians’ in S. Pedersen and P. Mandler eds., *After the Victorians: Private conscience and public duty in modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1994) pp. 1-17.

³¹⁶ Rodney Lowe, ‘Government’ in S. Constantine, M. W. Kirby and M. B. Rose, *The First World War in British History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995) pp. 46-49.

³¹⁷ Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986) p. 646.

³¹⁸ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915-1920, 10 February 1917, p. 106.

³¹⁹ DHC: FB 12/6/1, Documents of Town Clerk, p. 4.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*

and literature was distributed from house to house through the agency of the Boy Scouts and elementary schools'.³²² This strategy reflected the deep level of investment of the civil society of the county in this type of mobilization. Gregory argues that the reasons why contemporaries invested in war loans were evident in that these investments were intended to 'speed victory and therefore relieve suffering, both of their soldiers and their relatives'.³²³ Simultaneously, Gregory argues that it should be observed that for some individuals the War Loan was a convenient and comfortable means to present their solidarity and commitment to the war effort: 'In effect the war loan subscriber is being asked to make a sacrifice, which is no sacrifice, or rather one which leads to certain redemption, both spiritual and financial'.³²⁴ In Edinborough, shop keepers were motivated to invest in war loans which were, in Gregory's view, a self-evident mixture of patriotism and self interest. In fact, these shopkeepers benefited from 'self-advertisement and also perhaps deflecting charges of unpatriotic profiteering'.³²⁵

Another example of this deep investment and co-ordination of local civil society in Exeter was the Tank Week ending December 15 1917. During this 'Tank Week', a model Tank was used in a procession through the streets of Exeter to which it became 'a centre of attraction where subscribers could make application for War Bonds'.³²⁶ Parry revealed that £40,400 was subscripted during the week.³²⁷ Similarly, in February 1918, the town of Northampton held a 'Tank Week' which was dedicated to raise subscriptions for War Loans. According to Pierre Purseigle, the local elite of Northampton were also active when they 'weighed in with the organisation of [this] "Tank Week" dedicated to war loans, the chairman of the organizing committee spelled

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³²³ Gregory, *Last Great War*, p. 223.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

³²⁶ DHC: FB 12/6/1, Documents of Town Clerk, p. 5.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

out the call to civic pride'.³²⁸ Moreover, the 'Tank Week' at Northampton had 'conjured up a national competition with the other towns holding a "Tank Week" at the same time'.³²⁹ Purseigle suggests that the very success of patriotic days and events such as these 'underlined the potency of local identities in the involvement of the populations' with the war effort.³³⁰ Another example of the success of these events in Devon was noted in the summer of 1918 by the Ashburton War Charities Committee when it was revealed that the sum of money that was raised during the 'hut week effort amounted to £359 15s. 7d.'.³³¹

Nevertheless, some charitable undertakings that were made by local government officials in the county were not universally well received. An example of this was in 1918 when the Mayor of Tiverton, Alfred T. Gregory, sacrificed his car, by selling it in order to buy war bonds and then subsequently using a horse and cart for his travel needs. When news of Gregory's donation was heard in the capital, it was received with humour, bewilderment and even outright disgust. One soldier overseas wrote to Gregory and called him a damned liar because he claimed he had found 'happiness in the humblest of vehicles'.³³² Despite the scepticism and incomprehension that accompanied Gregory's actions to buy war bonds, the deed was intended to show his commitment to the war effort and present this patriotic sacrifice as an example for other members of the local elite to follow suit. At the same time, Devon's local government authorities faced difficult challenges to overcome in order to maintain stability in 1917 and 1918. In 1917, HRDC had experienced a crisis with the district's roads. From 1914 to 1917, the state of the district's roads had progressively worsened with the haulage of timber for

³²⁸ Pierre Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War' in J. Macleod and P. Purseigle eds., *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) p. 103.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ *Western Times*, 19 June 1918, p. 3.

³³² Alfred T. Gregory, *Recollections of a country editor* (Tiverton: Tiverton Gazette, 1932) p. 68.

the war effort. Moreover, after 1916 the workforce who maintained these roads continually faced conscription. As a result of the constant demands of conscription and the prospect of better wages in the Army, the workforce continued to decline into 1917. This prompted HRDC to submit on 7 January 1917 a request to DCC for 20 German POW's as an alternative source of labour for the maintenance of the district's Highways.³³³ However, DCC informed HRDC on 24 February 1917 that they should be wary about this request because the work of POW's on Road Maintenance 'could not be relied upon'.³³⁴ Therefore, despite the prospect that POW's seemed to present a convenient and effective workforce to maintain the roads, this quick solution seemed to be more troublesome than it was worth. This prompted HRDC during their meeting on 24 February 1917 to advise the surveyor to make the best arrangements he could to obtain and keep fresh labour at a wage that did not exceed 20/- per week.³³⁵

Nevertheless, during 1917, the situation with the district's roads and their labour force had become more serious. It had worsened to the extent that on 14 July 1917, HRDC instructed the Surveyor that 'in order to keep the men who were threatening to leave, to offer them 2/6 per week [as a] war bonus'.³³⁶ However, despite HRDC's best efforts to appease the workmen, they continued to leave or threaten to leave. On 29 December 1917, the situation with the roads reached breaking point to the extent that the supervisor had brought up the necessity to increase the wages in 'consequence of other employers giving higher wages and the men leaving him'.³³⁷ This prompted HRDC to grant the Surveyor permission to use his discretion to 'grant increases of 2/6 a week where he thought fit'.³³⁸ HRDC also decided that for the exceptional requests that went

³³³ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915 – 1920, 27 January 1917, p. 104.

³³⁴ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915 – 1920, 24 February 1917, p. 108.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³³⁶ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915 – 1920, 14 July 1917, p. 127.

³³⁷ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915 – 1920, 29 December 1917, p. 147.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

beyond the 2/6 a week increase, they instructed the Surveyor that these claims would be brought before a sub-Committee for further review.³³⁹

Notwithstanding HRDC measures which they hoped would appease the highways workforce grievances, the number of men employed on the maintenance of the district's highways continued to decline. On 18 May 1918, HRDC took matters into their own hands and instructed the Surveyor of the district's roads to claim exemption for any of his men if they were called up for service.³⁴⁰ This action demonstrates that the situation with the district's roads had become so drastic that HRDC were in a difficult position. Due to the deteriorated state of the roads and urgent requirements of the highways for the war effort, HRDC were left with little alternative but to relent to the workforce's demands because they needed to save every workman on the roads from conscription. At the same time, workmen for the district's roads were given an opportunity to press their demands. The evidence of the road workers in the Honiton district verifies the argument made by Bernard Waites that there was a growth in the 'collective bargaining power of the less skilled [workforce] between 1914 and 1920'.³⁴¹

Similarly, there were concerns raised by local government officials about the state of the county in 1918. During the spring of 1918, Lord Fortescue and other DCC members were concerned that if any more men were removed from agriculture, fishing and forestry it would hamper their production in Devon.³⁴² On 25 February 1918, Fortescue was of the opinion that too many skilled men had been taken from the county. This was to such an extent that he was certain that 'our local industries cannot afford to be

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915 – 1920, 18 May 1918, p. 169.

³⁴¹ Bernard Waites, *A Class Society at War: England, 1914-18* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers Limited, 1987) p. 133.

³⁴² DHC: 1262M/151, Letter to Hughes-Buller from Lord Fortescue, March 1918.

deprived of essential labourers'.³⁴³ It was clear that other councillors in DCC agreed with Fortescue's assessment of the mood in the county in 1918. White reveals that there were some local notables in the county who were 'actively working against the military authorities and hindering the recruitment process'.³⁴⁴ In a letter from Earl Fortescue to Hughes-Buller from March 1918 he conveyed the fact that there seemed to be a 'fair degree of contradiction between the needs of the armed forces and the needs of the county'.³⁴⁵ Fortescue was adamant that the National Service Department would understand his point of view 'once the dizziness of war has past'.³⁴⁶ He revealed in his memoirs that there 'were endless struggles about men' to which the WO 'very properly claimed all able bodied men for the Army'.³⁴⁷ In return, they offered men who were 'only fit for Home Service' along with released men who were still in training 'on Agricultural Furlough at busy times'.³⁴⁸ It led Fortescue to conclude that though 'even in the atmosphere of good will that prevailed between us and the Recruiting Authorities in Devon there was some friction and a good many hard cases; in which the truthful and patriotic man was more likely to suffer than the plausible shirker'.³⁴⁹

After the failure of the Spring Offensives in 1918, the Agricultural Executive Committee (AEC) was set the task of finding an additional 30,000 men for the Army. In April 1918, the policy that was intended to achieve this task was known as the 'clean-cut'. According to Fortescue's memoirs, this was the worst task that was set to the AEC. Indeed, he reveals that it was cruel to go through the list of the 2,500 men employed on all the farms in the county.³⁵⁰ The quota of men that Devon had to provide was 1,000

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ White, 'War and the Home Front', p. 240.

³⁴⁵ DHC: 1262M/151, Letter to Hughes-Buller from Lord Fortescue, March 1918.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ DHC: 1262M/FH/42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 44.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

farmers to which 250 farmers had to be supplied ‘by the Northern Division’ of the county.³⁵¹ Nearly all of the members of the DWAC were farmers who played up well to the task.³⁵² However, Fortescue also suggests that one member whose son had been forced to join up because of the insistent efforts of Fortescue the member responded in a sweeping manner that ‘on the principle of the Fox who had lost his tail was thereafter all for drastic measures with other people’.³⁵³ Yet, there were agriculturalists in Devon who were not supportive of this combing out process. One farmer wrote to the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* on 10 May 1918 before the harvest to complain that Devon’s Tribunals should not draw further on men ‘engaged in agriculture at such a critical time’.³⁵⁴ Instead of calling up agriculturalists at this important time, the farmer suggested that a ‘great many men could be taken from the Devonport Dockyard, where thousands have flocked since the war began to avoid fighting and to receive a wage out of all proportion to that paid to the boys who are fighting either in the Army or Navy’.³⁵⁵ During the harvest of 1918, HRDC accepted a request from the Eastern Division of the DWAC to ‘release all suitable Road Men for the corn harvest’.³⁵⁶ In addition to these efforts, Fortescue also encouraged military tribunals across Devon to be more compassionate towards awarding exemptions. His justification for this request was that he believed that the mood of the county would ‘continue to decline if the populace were not “properly cared for”’.³⁵⁷ Therefore, despite the new demands that the war brought to the fore, the stability of the county in 1917 and 1918 was an important priority of the local government authorities in Devon.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 May 1918, p. 6.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ DHC: R7/9/C7, Minutes of Honiton Rural District Council, 1915-1920, 13 July 1918, p. 176.

³⁵⁷ DHC: 1262M/151, Letter to Hughes-Buller from Lord Fortescue, March 1918.

As previously mentioned, the presence of the Benedictine fraternity of Monks at Buckfast Abbey had caused great concern amongst populations of the surrounding district. This was evident in a letter to DCC dated 26 February 1917 from all of the Buckfast Monks. They believed that the continued agitation in spite of the HO's decision was 'naturally distressing to all of us and to allay it we hope the special constables will be appointed that we may continue our life in peace'.³⁵⁸ According to the author of the HO report, he believed that reading through its contents, forced one to the conclusion that the 'inmates of this Abbey have in the past done good charitable work in the neighbourhood and are no danger to the Community at large'.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, these concerns continued to be apparent during 1917 and 1918. On 27 February 1917, Sir Clement Kinloch-Cooke, the Conservative MP for Devonport, made further enquires about the monks to Sir George Cave, the Home Secretary under the Lloyd George Coalition, during a House of Commons debate. Kinloch-Cooke believed that it was 'undesirable that the abbey and grounds should be guarded locally, as they are within a few miles of the coast and close to a town doing government work'.³⁶⁰ Hence, he was of the opinion that the 'duty of watching alien enemies was not a local but a national one'.³⁶¹ The Home Secretary replied that the Buckfast Monks were exempted from internment as a result of a recommendation from the Advisory Committee.³⁶² Cave did reveal in his response some of what had been discussed at the special inquiry that was held at Buckfast Abbey in October 1916. It was agreed at this meeting that the Abbey might be watched by some special constables. This meant that they were taking steps that they had been 'asked to take in the public interest'.³⁶³ It was

³⁵⁸ TNA: HO 45/23540, part 49, ALIENS, Letter to Devon County Council, 26 February 1917, p. 4.

³⁵⁹ TNA: HO 45/23540, part 49, ALIENS, Home Office file, 17 November 1919, p. 2.

³⁶⁰ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 85, 27 February 1917, column 1846.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, column 1847.

revealed during the Commons debate on 18 April 1917 that this surveillance by special constables did not quell the strong unease from the local residents towards the monks.

William Joynson-Hicks, the Conservative MP for Brentford asked the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, William Brace, if he was going to ‘do anything with regard to the very strong feeling in the locality that these people ought to be interned instead of watched by special constables?’³⁶⁴ Brace replied that the monks could ‘claim their repatriation because they were priests’.³⁶⁵ However, Joynson-Hicks was adamant that due to the ‘very strong feeling in the locality that these people ought to be interned instead of watched by special constables’.³⁶⁶ Yet, Brace defended the HO’s actions and argued that Buckfast’s Monks were doing ‘very serviceable work for this nation’.³⁶⁷ On 4 May 1917, Brace said that the monks pursued gardening, farming and bee-keeping alongside their religious activities.³⁶⁸ Nonetheless, it is evident that the attempt by the HO to quell the unease caused by allegations that Buckfast’s Monks were German spies was unsuccessful. Hence, the response of the BUDC revealed the nature of paranoia surrounding the Benedictine Monks had fuelled in the minds of the communities around the Abbey.

Yet, the concerns over stability and war-weariness also created an ‘unfriendly climate for all foreigners, including friendly aliens’.³⁶⁹ In September 1918, the Clerk of the Parish Council of the East Devon village of Dunkeswell wrote to the Superintendent of Police at Honiton to request for an increased police supervision in the Parish due to a large number of Portuguese labourers living in the Parish, especially considering that

³⁶⁴ Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, Vol. 85, 18 April 1917, column 1661.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, column 1662.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, columns 1661-1662.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, column 1662.

³⁶⁸ *The Times*, 4 May 1917, p. 10.

³⁶⁹ Robb, *British Culture and the First World War*, p. 10.

the ‘Licensee [of the local public house] is a woman’.³⁷⁰ The reason why a woman had become the Licensee of the Royal Oak public house by September 1918 was because the original Licensee, George Hornsey, had been called up on 17 May 1918.³⁷¹ This meant that his wife had stepped into the breach to take over the management of the business. However, this move raised significant concerns amongst the members of Dunkeswell Parish Council (DPC) because they held serious reservations as to whether a woman had the capability to manage the behaviour of the regular customers who frequented a public house. As Stella Moss has suggested there were serious fears over the subject of women’s drinking in wartime. Despite the lack of credibility in these fears, it was these claims and concerns about women’s drinking that constituted ‘one strand of a richly woven tapestry of social critique about the changing place of women in wartime civil society’.³⁷² However, the situation with a woman who was liable for the moral conduct of those who frequented the public house of the village raised anxieties amongst the male members of DPC. In particular, they questioned whether she would be able to control any problems concerning the public behaviour of the Portuguese labourers in the locality. Hence, they requested an additional police presence in the village. It was hoped that, through the effective surveillance and monitoring from the local constabulary, the Royal Oak’s Woman Licensee would adhere to the requests for responsible moral behaviour and moderation in serving alcohol to the labourers as well as to her local patrons.

A welfare institution that was attempted to preserve the standards of provision despite the challenges of war was the Devon County Asylum (DCA). Based at Exminster Hospital, the DCA was responsible for the rehabilitation of mainly working-class

³⁷⁰ DHC: 5182A/PX1, Minute book of Dunkeswell Parish Council, 1894 – 1967, 30 September 1918, p. 68, Richard Broad, *Dunkeswell: Parish and People* (Dunkeswell: Richard Broad, 1994) p. 63.

³⁷¹ *Western Times*, 7 May 1918, p. 2.

³⁷² Stella Moss, “‘Wartime Hysterics’: Alcohol, Women and the Politics of Wartime Social Purity” in J. Meyer ed., *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) p. 148.

patients in Devon who suffered from mental health issues. It was noted within the 1917 yearly report that the members of the medical staff had ‘evidently been toiling under considerable strain’.³⁷³ This was also due to the fact that many of the DCA’s male staff members had been conscripted into the army.³⁷⁴ Moreover, the conscription of these men was made even more apparent when considering the fact that many of the DCA’s male staff members were former soldiers.³⁷⁵ Joesph Melling and Bill Forsythe show that there had been a clear deterioration in the relations between the staff, attendants and Doctors of the DCA before the Great War.³⁷⁶ However, according to the author of the DCA’s report of 1917, he believed that the staff members were entitled to ‘much credit for the manner in which the work of the Asylum has been carried out’.³⁷⁷ In the yearly report for 1919, it was revealed that, within the period under review which included eight and a half months of 1918, a ‘very high death rate prevailed here, as in other institutions of the kind, due mainly to war conditions and insufficient nutrition’.³⁷⁸ Although the inspectors noted that there had been an extremely satisfactory fall in the death rate ‘shown by a comparison of that of 1918 with that from the 1st January to 7th December 1919’.³⁷⁹

Susan Pedersen argues that ‘welfare work’ for women during the First World War did not become a state service but was instead ‘left to benevolent organizations like the YWCA’.³⁸⁰ Based in the South Devon seaside resort of Torquay, one such benevolent

³⁷³ DHC: 3769A/HIA/2, The Exe Vale Hospital Visitors Book, 1904 – 1926, 13 March 1917, pp. 192-193.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe, *The Politics of Madness: The State, Insanity and Society in England, 1845-1914* (London: Routledge, 2006) p. 57.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³⁷⁷ DHC: 3769A/HIA/2, The Exe Vale Hospital Visitors Book, 1904 – 1926, 13 March 1917, pp. 192-193.

³⁷⁸ DHC: 3769A/HIA/2, The Exe Vale Hospital Visitors Book, 1904 – 1926, 8 December 1919, pp. 215-216.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 106.

institution that provided assistance with the welfare of women was the Church of England Temperance Society for Female Inebriates at Temple Lodge (CoETSFITL). However, the CoETSFITL's future from 1914 to 1917 was in doubt as the number of women stationed at the CoETSFITL continued to drop. By 10 August 1917, there were only 6 patients in the home and the shortage of patients had 'become most serious'.³⁸¹ The CoETSFITL's Committee considered whether they should accept any other cases rather than solely inebriates in an attempt to find alternative sources of income. This led the CoETSFITL's Committee to propose that an advertisement should be placed in the *Church Times* offering ladies a sanctuary from their suffering. The advertisement read: 'disturbed nerves or threatened breakdown & requiring rest can be received at Temple Lodge for 21/- weekly'.³⁸² There were no responses to this particular advert. Nevertheless, the CoETSFITL's Committee were not perturbed by the lack of responses and drafted a new advertisement which they inserted into both *The Church Times* and *The Guardian*. The notice was designed to inform readers that Temple Lodge was a home of rest in which ladies who experienced 'alcoholic or Drug Excess'.³⁸³ In fact, the advertisement promoted the CoETSFITL as an ideal retreat to ladies who needed a rest or cure from air raids.³⁸⁴ The presentation of this advertisement is interesting to note. The second advert offers an experience which was a holiday retreat from the conditions of war rather than a sanctuary for individuals with an addiction to alcohol.

Conversely, an individual could interpret that the CoETSFITL's proposal was more akin to a tourist advertisement. Indeed, the CoETSFITL's location on a key resort on the English Riviera meant that this appeared to enhance the proposal's possibility for

³⁸¹ Lambeth Palace Library: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 7 September 1917, folios 13-14.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, folio 15.

³⁸³ LPL: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 5 October 1917, folio 16.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

success. The CoETSFITL's Committee were so confident that the advert would bring in new trade they authorised the 'Superintendent & the Hon. Secretary to purchase a few cheap rugs – should rest-care visitors come'.³⁸⁵ However, by 6 December 1917, despite their confidence in this venture, the CoETSFITL received no replies to the advert.³⁸⁶ The suggestion to partake in the luxurious past-time of taking a holiday in a period of wartime austerity was perceived to be a counterproductive activity towards the war-effort. The CoETSFITL decided to endorse a different approach to tourism through the promotion of escapism which was a key part of the holiday experience. Yet, despite the potential business benefits that could be gained through this venture, it can be observed that their advertisement was perceived in light of the social morality of wartime to be inappropriate.

As a consequence of the failure of the scheme to rebrand the CoETSFITL as a retreat for women, whether they were inebriates or not, the question of the CoETSFITL's future was again in jeopardy. One proposal put forward during the CoETSFITL Committee's meeting on 11 January 1918, was to follow the example of the hotels in Devon's holiday resorts. This meant that the CoETSFITL would be used by the Red Cross as a hospital for the wounded. Subsequently, Mr Hoskins reported during the following meeting that 'the Red Cross Hospital nurses would not be able to avail themselves of the offered facilities'.³⁸⁷ However, the CoETSFITL's superintendent received an application on 7 June 1918 from the Red Cross nurses to ask if they could use the sitting room upstairs with gas stove fittings.³⁸⁸ The CoETSFITL's Committee

³⁸⁵ LPL: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 9 November 1917, folios 17-18.

³⁸⁶ LPL: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 6 December 1917, folio 18.

³⁸⁷ LPL: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 8 February 1918, folio 20.

³⁸⁸ LPL: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 7 June 1918, folio 25.

responded that owing to the restriction on gas consumption they could not ‘see its way to accede to the application’.³⁸⁹ Therefore, despite the intention of the CoETSFITL’s Committee to take advantage of the war’s opportunities, they were unable to accommodate the Red Cross nurses due to the war’s restrictions. Nevertheless, on 12 July 1918, the CoETSFITL’s fortunes seemed to change, as the CoETSFITL’s Committee discussed whether to appoint a chaplain to present regular services since ‘now that [new] patients were coming in’.³⁹⁰ Alcohol, like tourism, was perceived by many contemporaries to be counter-productive to the war effort. Hence, the language of temperance promoted by the abstinence groups became dovetailed within the lexicon of war and sacrifice.³⁹¹

Conclusion

The initiatives taken in Devon were part of the larger project to reinvigorate the support of the British population for the war until victory could be secured.³⁹² It must be said that the NWAC’s efforts to remobilize national efforts during 1917 and 1918 were ‘by no means completely successful’.³⁹³ Yet, the NWAC’s work did help in the remobilization of the British population’s resolve to ‘support the war to the end’.³⁹⁴ The work of the NWAC in Devon provided a further opportunity for Devon’s elite to appeal to the county’s citizens to reinvigorate themselves in the war effort. As Horne suggests the remobilization that the NWAC advocated did entail a ‘substantial voluntary participation by notables and dignitaries and by the cadres of the political and

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ LPL: MS 2071, Church of England Temperance Society, 4 January 1917 – 30 November 1925, 12 July 1918, folio 26.

³⁹¹ Moss, “‘Wartime Hysterics’”, pp. 147-171.

³⁹² Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain*, pp. 242-274, Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, pp. 195-211.

³⁹³ John Horne, ‘Introduction: mobilizing for “total war”, 1914-1918’ in J. Horne ed., *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 16.

³⁹⁴ Horne, ‘Remobilizing for “total war”’, p. 211.

administrative systems down to a very local level'.³⁹⁵ It is clear that the NWAC's meetings in Devon also gave the 'provincial patriots' another avenue to disseminate and exhort the ideals of the social morality of wartime. Undeniably, the meetings of the NWAC gave the 'provincial patriots' another avenue to extend their wartime authority, exhort their views on what constituted patriotism and prescribe to Devon's population acceptable behaviours. At a meeting of the NWAC in Okehampton on 5 January 1918, George Lambert advocated to the audience that 'they were all for the State to-day, and they must sink their personal grievances. He wanted every one to realise the seriousness of the crisis we were passing through'.³⁹⁶ Yet, the success of these projects in Devon was dependent on the involvement of local populations and how the local elite educated and convinced their respective communities of the importance of the directives that constituted remobilization.

In Devon, the local elites and civic society struggled to convince the people of Devon of the importance of engaging with all of these measures which were part of the remobilization of the British war effort. To suggest that a truly mobilized Home Front existed in Devon is disingenuous as this chapter has shown that remobilization, like self-mobilization, had distinct constraints. This was evident in Devon with the appeals from civic society, including Devon's elite and clergy, for the county's farmers to increase the domestic food production of wheat, potatoes and other arable food stuffs. The drive to expand productivity during 1917 and 1918 meant that a 'large area of permanent grass was ploughed up' across Britain.³⁹⁷ However, in Devon these calls to dedicate more acreage to grow more potatoes and cereals failed to persuade many of the county's farmers change their working practices. Indeed, some of Devon's farmers

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³⁹⁶ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 7 January 1918, p. 3.

³⁹⁷ Peter Dewey, 'Agriculture, Agrarian Society and the Countryside' in C. Wrigley ed., *A Companion to Early Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) p. 272.

argued that legislation such as the CPA and the introduction of tractors were ill-suited to the nature of farming in the county. This opposition was evident when during a meeting in South Molton on 6 September 1918 it was announced that an Executive Officer had been appointed to encourage increased food production in the district, two agriculturalists ‘voiced their objections with considerable warmth’.³⁹⁸ However, a correspondent of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* revealed that if these farmers had been provided with a better picture of the experience of the Executive Officer with food production, this hostility could have been avoided. Yet, it prompted the correspondent to venture that the ‘North Devon farmer will not brook unnecessary interference with the conduct of his business, even in wartime, and there is no reason he should’.³⁹⁹ These calls to grow more cereals were in fact better received by the public and private agencies than the agriculturalists. The timber that was yielded from Devon’s forests was of vital significance to the war effort. Similarly, the process of harvesting this wood proved to be a problematic one as the Portuguese labourers hired to undertake the felling and cutting of this wood worked in difficult conditions. As a result of this, the productivity of these men suffered.

The crisis in the supply of food resulted in the introduction of rationing across Britain. In Devon, rationing was accepted but only on the condition that it would apply across all segments of county’s population. In addition, the crisis in food supply meant that endeavours were made by Devonians to translate ‘national interest into local action’ through an increase in domestic food production in the county.⁴⁰⁰ This also prompted Devonians to devise alternative strategies for food supplies in Devon which included the collection of seagulls’ eggs, using unused plots in graveyards for the cultivation of

³⁹⁸ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 7 September 1918, p. 2.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ Grieves, ‘War Comes to the Fields’, p. 160.

potatoes and catching rabbits as an alternative sources of meat. Nevertheless, there were some Devonians who ignored the requests to increase domestic food production. An example of this was in a letter published in the *Western Morning News* in 1917 which criticised four men who had constructed a pleasure garden in the Dartmoor town of Okehampton when they could be better employed setting potatoes'.⁴⁰¹ By using the social morality of wartime, the letter's author emphasized the juxtaposition in the actions of patriotic and unpatriotic individuals. He revealed that there was a tennis court being constructed in the town whilst 'patriotic people were digging up' their gardens.⁴⁰² At the same time, it must be observed that the construction of a pleasure garden in Okehampton revealed that there were individuals who believed that it would be more profitable to run a pleasure garden than transforming the land to food production. Therefore, despite the appeals of Devon's elite for the county's population to undertake actions for the national interest, there were some Devonians who placed their own self-interest above those of the nation. This was evident in the protests made against the formation of the DGPS and profiteers who both took food from Devon. Similarly, Devon's fishermen had to travel a very fine line between being accused of selfishly pilfering fish or being praised for fishing within war conditions in the name of domestic food production. As the correspondence and the comments of Reynolds reveal the county's fishermen had to also persevere in their fishing practices against the possibility of continued recruitment efforts by the Navy.

The nature of how individuals in Devon attempted to navigate through the uncertainty of 1917 and 1918 was also evident in the challenges that faced the businessmen of the EDC. After the EDC had lost their lathe in 1917, the Company could not conduct any

⁴⁰¹ Gerard Wasley, *Devon and the Great War* (Tiverton: Devon Books, 2000) p. 114.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

further repairs on the Admiralty's vessels.⁴⁰³ This jeopardised a valued source of income for the EDC and prompted one of the board members, Mr Aiken, to ask on 7 June 1917 whether Exmouth's dock could be developed from a 'shipbuilding point of view'.⁴⁰⁴ Through the adaptation of the dock to become a shipbuilding yard, Mr Aikin sensed a financially viable business opportunity. As a result, the members of the EDC's Board agreed to advertise the development of Exmouth's dock for this purpose in the *Shipping Gazette* and other newspapers. Yet, despite two responses to the announcement which expressed interest in their proposal, there was no further reference within the EDC's minutes to this promising enterprise. It must be considered that, despite the potential financial incentive to transform the docks into a ship building yard, the venture was not deemed entirely worthwhile.

Throughout 1917 and 1918 some farmers in Devon were concerned about the survival of their farms. Therefore, there were agriculturalists in county who sought to preserve the future of their farms as a family business against the threat of conscription. The report for the Agricultural Wage Board of 1918 had praised Devon along with Cornwall and Somerset for outstanding levels of female employment in farming. Nonetheless, the evidence of this chapter strengthens the conclusion that Devon's farmers were deeply apprehensive to employ women who were not experienced in agriculture. Indeed, the 3,801 women workers in the county's agricultural sector were typically family relations employed on the farm.⁴⁰⁵ This was evident on 10 March 1917 when Heathcoat-Amory complained that Devon's farmers were not readily applying for substitute labour due to the fact that many of them did not know that 'these substitutes are here and

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ DHC: 6039B/M2, Exmouth Dock, Pier and Steamship Company: Board of Director's Minutes, 1900 – 1920, 7 June 1917, p. 224.

⁴⁰⁵ Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War*, p. 129.

available'.⁴⁰⁶ He warned Devon's agriculturalists that if they did not apply for substitute labour quickly the 'substitutes will be sent off to another county'.⁴⁰⁷ In Devon, remobilization was more successful in economic terms as was evident in the general popularity and appeal of war loan campaigns amongst many Devonians. Indeed, Devon was listed as one of the ten counties in England and Wales which contained the largest number of War Savings Associations (WSA) with Devon possessing 31.⁴⁰⁸ Gregory acknowledges that whilst the number of local WSA's is a crude measure to indicate their popularity 'it does give some idea of the depth of involvement of local communities'.⁴⁰⁹

In Britain, France and Germany, the politics of food stoked the fires of war-weariness and fuelled accusations of profiteering.⁴¹⁰ In Devon, the crisis of food supplies had amplified vocalised accusations of profiteering against farmers and food suppliers. The increase in the price of food stuffs also directly contributed to expressions of war-weariness in the county. However, the concerns of stability in Devon did manifest themselves in attacks against the CO's incarcerated in Dartmoor Prison and other individuals such as the Buckfast Monks who were deemed to embody the threat to internal security in the county. At the same time, that the local elite were the mediators of the war effort on a local level, there were also some local notables in Devon who

⁴⁰⁶ IWM: Documents. 17014, Private Papers of C L Stirling OBE CBE QC, 1916, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 10 March 1917.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ Gregory, *The Last Great War*, p. 221.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ Bonzon and Davis, 'Feeding the cities' pp. 305-341, Robert, 'The image of the profiteer', pp. 104-132, Peter Dewey, 'Nutrition and living standards in wartime Britain', in R. Wall and J. Winter eds., *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp. 197-220, Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp. 214-216, Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp. 66-68, Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 138-144, Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 31-86.

deeply concerned about the state of the county during 1917 and 1918. The escalation of conscription had taken its toll upon the socio-economic fabric of Devon. Consequently, whilst voluntary recruitment had brought the ‘provincial patriots’ together, the continual mounting demands of conscription and the war effort had raised significant doubts amongst Devon’s elite. Previously, Earl Fortescue, who was one of the most dedicated campaigners of war effort in Devon, raised concerns in 1918 that any additional call of men by the military authorities could create irreversible damage to the county. Throughout 1917 and 1918, in the applications for exemption, it became evident that individual priorities in Devon did overrule many appeals for Devonians to consider the national interest over their own interests. Meanwhile, the criticism against Devon’s notables on the tribunal panels and the escalating demands of the military in the county grew during 1917 and 1918.

The perception that tribunalists on the DAT served with a sense of public duty in their deliberations was not universally shared. The prominent citizens of Devon who were on these tribunal panels were frustrated by the conflicting demands of the Army and the Home Front. In one instance, the patience of some members of Devon’s elite with the idiosyncratic system of exemption was tested to breaking point. This was reflected in how the sovereignty and authority of the decisions made by some local tribunals was continually challenged. It is clear that authorities on a local level sensed the importance to maintain stability in Devon and this was evident in the challenge to maintain the standards of welfare on offer in some of the county’s institutions. At the same time, welfare institutions were concerned about their survival in 1917 and 1918. The DCA and the CoETSFITL faced a decline in the number of individuals’ housed in these institutions and sought solutions on how to overcome the challenging years of 1917 and 1918.

The news that the First World War had ended with the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918 was received by Devon's population with a mixture of celebration and relief. The correspondent for the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* described that, 'naturally', the prevailing mood in the minds of most of the citizens of Exeter was 'of heartfelt thanksgiving'.⁴¹¹ Exeter had, according to the correspondent, become engulfed in a 'wave of thankfulness, relief and enthusiasm'.⁴¹² Shortly after the news of the Armistice had been confirmed, he had seen thousands of people from all parts of Exeter display 'the greatest enthusiasm'.⁴¹³ Correspondingly in Exwick, once the news of the Armistice had reached the village's population, they 'all went wild with excitement and delight'.⁴¹⁴ There were similar reactions of enthusiasm and excitement towards the news of the Armistice across Devon amongst the populations of Crediton, Dawlish, Exmouth, Tavistock, Tiverton and Newton Abbot.⁴¹⁵ In addition, there was a similar echo of the urgent need for news during early August 1914 with thousands of Exonians who had swarmed in front of the newspaper offices to read the declaration of war. This was seen outside the offices of the *Western Times* in Exeter's High Street where it was reported that once the news of the Armistice had been posted in the window, the crowd 'immediately transformed into a jubilant, cheering mass of citizens of all ages [and], all conditions'.⁴¹⁶ Subsequently, the news of the Armistice on 11 November 1918 meant that the religious intercession services at Exeter's churches for that day 'were turned into services of thanksgiving'.⁴¹⁷ The Bishop of Exeter suggested to the crowd who

⁴¹¹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 12 November 1918, p. 3.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ A. H. Rousham, *Exwick during the Great War, 1914-1919* (Exeter: A. H. Rousham, 1920) p. 25.

⁴¹⁵ *Western Times*, 12 November 1918, p. 5, PWDRO: 1793/43/41, *The Tavistock Gazette*, 15 November 1918.

⁴¹⁶ *Western Times*, 12 November 1918, p. 8.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

gathered outside Exeter Cathedral that the Armistice was not only a time of thanksgiving but also a time to realize the ‘majesty of their God’.⁴¹⁸

Similarly, the Mayor of Exeter, Sir James Owen, used the Armistice to offer a short address which underscored the spiritual dimensions of the conflict. After the Cathedral service, a military and civic parade processed through the streets of the city which came to a halt at the statue of one of the county’s military heroes, Sir Redvers Buller. Owen declared to the audience who assembled there that the hearts of the citizens of Exeter were not boastful but were instead filled with thankfulness. They had all done their best to help to secure victory but he was certain that it was the divine authority of God which had guaranteed Britain’s victory against the Germans. In Owen’s address, it was God to whom they should offer their thanks because ‘we could never have smashed the German Army unless God had been with us’.⁴¹⁹ A spiritual token of appreciation was also offered by Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory. On 11 November 1918, he called upon all of his employees at his Textile factory in Tiverton to gather in the yard of the factory. Once they were all assembled, he informed them that they were to ‘cease work for the day, and to go home and say “Thank you” to God’.⁴²⁰ A correspondent for the *Western Morning News* came to the conclusion that across Devon there were surely never ‘thanksgiving services so widely held more fervent and sincere’.⁴²¹ Adrian Gregory and Annette Becker suggest that with the arrival of the Armistices, the churches of London and Paris ‘sought to extend their spiritual war effort’.⁴²² These perspectives from Devon offer a valuable point that just as many of the British and French populations turned to

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 12 November 1918, p. 3.

⁴²⁰ Alfred T. Gregory, *Recollections of a Country Editor* (London: Woodward, 1932) p. 70.

⁴²¹ *Western Morning News*, 12 November 1918 as cited in William Stone, *Hero of the Fleet: Two World Wars, One extraordinary life – The Memoirs of Centenarian* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2009) p. 52.

⁴²² Adrian Gregory, Annette Becker, John Moses, Patrick Porter and Jeffrey Verhey, ‘Religious sites and practices’ in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 421.

various “sacred unions” which were continuous interactions between the political and the spiritual throughout the war, Devon’s notables turned to the idea of a sacred union as a means to provide an explanation to Devonians for victory.⁴²³ The idea of a sacred union between God and the English people was deeply rooted in English history according to H. L. Bickersteth, the Reverend of Tavistock Parish Church. In Bickersteth’s sermon, he claimed the people of Tavistock had congregated to thank God for the Armistice in a solemn way in the six-hundred year old Church just as the ‘men had come to thank God for victory at Agincourt, the Armada victory and also for the result of the wars in the time of Napoleon’.⁴²⁴ Through the evocation of these victories, Bickersteth linked the Armistice into a historical narrative of the righteousness of Britain’s cause.

In Plymouth, a correspondent for the *Western Morning News* reported that in some crowds in the city there was ‘in some respect boisterous rejoicing but there was a happy absence of the wild and unrestrained behaviour which, from its state of origin has received the name “Mafficking”’.⁴²⁵ In this correspondent’s opinion, the reason as to why there was an absence of unrestrained behaviour was due to the restrictions in the opening hours of public houses and the sale of alcohol. Consequently, he argued that whilst there was plenty of noise and jubilation amongst the crowds there was ‘very little to which reasonable objection could be taken’.⁴²⁶ He explained to most people that he saw on 11 November, the sense of relief that they felt was ‘too deep for light manifestations of joy’.⁴²⁷ Simultaneously, Edrica De La Pole recorded in her diary on 11 November that one of the residents of the village decided to celebrate the Armistice

⁴²³ Annette Becker, ‘Faith, Ideologies, and the “Cultures of War” ’ trans. by John Horne in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 237.

⁴²⁴ PWDRO: 1793/43/41, *The Tavistock Gazette*, 15 November 1918.

⁴²⁵ *Western Morning News*, 12 November 1918 as cited in Stone, *Hero of the Fleet*, p. 52.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

by getting drunk.⁴²⁸ Yet, James Thomas Rodgers chronicled in his journal that in Plymouth the ‘whole population seemed to be expressing their joy, everyone in his own way’ to which they were all ‘unmolested and all in good humour’.⁴²⁹ The columnist for the *Western Morning News* went on to stress that, on the whole, the way in which the people of Plymouth had received the news of the Armistice did ‘them credit from the personal and patriotic point of view’.⁴³⁰ Meanwhile, Teignmouth resident Albert Best did not know how to document the reactions of the people who crowded the streets of the South Devon town. According to Best, the crowds of people along with children who were carrying flags were ‘making some sort of noise’.⁴³¹ However, the noise that emanated from the crowd was not of euphoric celebration. In its place, Best suggests that the celebrations were conducted in an orderly manner because of the presence of soldiers and sailors in the crowd.⁴³²

In a letter to Henry Maurice, Stephen Reynolds described the intense sense of relief the news of the Armistice had provided him.⁴³³ However, this feeling seemed for him to be swamped with ‘a kind of backwash’.⁴³⁴ He clarified that this backwash was his reflection upon the human cost of the war in the ‘thought of who and what will never be any more’.⁴³⁵ In a contemplative tone, he revealed that his primary focus was upon the ‘inadequacy of the end compared with the horror of getting there’.⁴³⁶ Indeed, he suggested that to witness the festivity of the people in Sidmouth’s streets who celebrated the Armistice gave him ‘the feeling of witnessing an orgie in a graveyard

⁴²⁸ PWDRO: 1306/26, Diary of Edrica De La Pole, 1918, 11 November 1918, p. 315.

⁴²⁹ PWDRO: 3010/1, Journal of James Thomas Rodgers, 11 November 1918, p. 241.

⁴³⁰ *Western Morning News*, 12 November 1918 as cited in Stone, *Hero of the Fleet*, p. 52.

⁴³¹ Best ed., *The Diaries of Albert Best*, 11 November 1918, p. 114

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ Reynolds, *The Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 333.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

(sic)'.⁴³⁷ A *Western Morning News* correspondent made a similar observation that in many homes across Plymouth, the Armistice was saddened by the losses incurred by the War.⁴³⁸ Yet, as the response of Reynolds shows, the arrival of the Armistice was perceived by some of Devon's population as a poignant occasion not only for celebration but also reflection.

The responses of some Devonians during 1917 and 1918 to appeals from Devon's elite to make greater sacrifices for the war effort reaffirmed the tension between individual priorities and those of the nation. Yet, the remobilization campaign to reinvigorate the determination of Devon's population support the war effort had many successes. The negotiation by Devon's notables with the county's population to undertake this second mobilization through war-loan campaigns and charitable activities was one such success. This success was due to the deep-rooted strength of humanitarian patriotism in Devon. The voluntary ethos still underpinned support for the war effort through grants and other financial incentives. However, Devon's population were increasingly hesitant about and often vocally opposed to the greater demands of the military and the requirements of the war economy. Although the demands of the war effort were important, for many Devonians their individual priorities and the preservation of the social-economic fabric of the county through 1917 and 1918 were of equally vital significance.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ *Western Morning News*, 12 November 1918 as cited in Stone, *Hero of the Fleet*, p. 52.

Conclusion

This microhistory of Devon from August 1914 to November 1918 suggests that the tension between individual and national survival underscores the fact that the war effort in the county was not understood as an all-encompassing phenomenon. When writing his memoirs for the war years in 1924, Earl Fortescue recalled that the conflict to him was mainly as a ‘confused mass of perpetual correspondence, committee meetings and anxiety’.¹ The *Western Morning News* noted that during the ‘trying period [of the war] not only recruiting but the agricultural organisation of the county occupied much of his [Fortescue’s] attention’.² An example of the pressure of Fortescue’s wartime responsibilities was when he concluded that the Belgian refugees in Devon were ‘not a very nice lot’.³ Fortescue had come to this conclusion because they were ‘exacting and tiresome, and a proportion were criminal and amoral’.⁴ By contrast, Alfred T. Gregory, Tiverton’s Mayor, recollects that there were some individuals in Tiverton to whom the war was considered as a ‘source of pecuniary profit’.⁵ Gregory suggests these unnamed profiteers had little consideration to hasten the duration of the war. Instead, they observed the ‘prolongation of the struggle with complacency’ due to the fact that they did not have any near relatives at the front.⁶ Therefore, Fortescue’s and Gregory’s suggestions underscore how the war brought great challenges to Devon’s elite as the county’s intermediaries of the war effort. This role of Devon’s notables and their relationship with the county’s population is one of the main analytical threads of this thesis.

¹ Devon Heritage Centre: 1262M/FH/42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 1.

² *Western Morning News*, 31 October 1932, p. 6.

³ DHC: 1262M/FH/42, Typescript memoirs for the war years, 1919, p. 27

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Gregory, *Recollections of a Country Editor*, p. 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Prominent figures of Devon's civil society, such as Lord and Lady Fortescue, Sir Ian and Lady Heathcoat-Amory, and the Mayor and Mayoress of Exeter, became arbiters of the war effort in the county. They cemented and extended their influence as intermediaries of the war effort upon wartime society in Devon through the activities of committees and organisations that were part of the war effort. In his account of Tavistock during the Great War, Ralph Richardson contended that Devon's elite should be applauded for how they administered their wartime responsibilities. These men, in his view, required a considerable amount of patience and diplomacy for the 'smooth working of the orders received, which were sometimes contradictory and not always as simple to carry out as the Authorities supposed'.⁷ Hence, Richardson proposed that Devon was well served by the county's elite who volunteered their 'services on these Committees for nothing, but the honour of doing something to help win the victory'.⁸ Yet, the arbitration of the war effort on a local level also provided Devon's notables with an opportunity to extend their influence and authority upon wartime society in Devon. Stephen Reynolds described Devon's elite as the 'provincial patriots' based on the fact they judged the patriotism of Devon's population against the strength of their own patriotism and superintended the 'patriotism of those who aren't [exempt from military service]'.⁹

A critical exploration of Reynolds's description of Devon's notables as the 'superintendents of patriotism' has shown that they did seek to superintend the nature of patriotism of Devon's population. The role of Devon's elite as self-appointed police-men and women of patriotism provides a valuable perspective on their activities to maintain order in the county and police against anti-patriotic behaviour. This was

⁷ Ralph Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918: Being a short account of the part played by Tavistock and Neighbourhood in the Great War* (Tavistock: Jolliffe & Son, 1919) p. 73.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Stephen Reynolds, *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. by Harold Wright (Richmond: Hogarth press, 1923) p. 291.

achieved both formally and informally which included undertakings such as the formation of wartime charities, the organisation of recruitment efforts, sitting on the MST's and making pronouncements at meetings of various wartime organisations. Examples of this are evident in Devon's recruitment efforts as shown in Chapters 1 and 2. In many cases, patriotism was a contested value and as a result the patriotism of Devon's population was not solely driven by militaristic sentiment. Hence, this microhistory of Devon during the First World War has shown how Devonians demonstrated their patriotism in many forms, enabling the county's population outside the requirements of military service to present their patriotism and claim citizenship in the wartime community. Devon's notables even presented their patriotism through lending of parts of their stately homes to become hospitals for the wounded. The nature of patriotism in Devon also raises awareness of war cultures in rural districts. The fact that Devonians understood and defined patriotism in more than one context reaffirms this notion and helps to explain why attempts by the 'provincial patriots' to control the discourses and nature of patriotism in Devon were not always effective. As shown in Chapters 1 and 2, Devon's farmers believed that to join the Army was not the only way to present their patriotism. Many Devonians in rural areas revealed the humanitarian nature of their patriotism through the charitable donation of food. Therefore, the definition of what constituted patriotism was a significantly contested notion in Devon. Hence, Devon's elites went to great lengths to influence and control the wartime discourses of patriotism through public addresses and encounters with the county's populace. Similarly, Devonshire's network of tribunals created under the auspices of the MSA provided another way in which Devon's elite could superintend over the patriotism of the county's men-folk. As seen in Chapters 3 and 4, the 'provincial patriots' on Devon's tribunals became self-appointed judicators and arbitrated not only

upon the appeals against conscription from Devon's men-folk but also the nature of their patriotism.

Devon's notables broadcast through speeches and publications in the local press definitions of what constituted 'patriotic' behaviour. This was defined with the use of examples from Devon that were deemed to be patriotic. Accordingly, the policing of patriotism in Devon neatly weaved into the dissemination of the language and representations of the social morality of wartime on a local level. Devon's elite attempted to promote and control their definition of patriotism through the projection of an idealised civilian identity and the advocacy of the language of sacrifice. Simultaneously, Devon's elite broadcast what they deemed to be unpatriotic examples from Devon to shame the misdemeanours of certain Devonians. This was evident in the coverage of Devon's Tribunals in local newspapers, which further propagated the 'provincial patriots' assessments of the 'patriotism' of those claiming exemption. Hence, the superintendence of patriotic behaviour in Devon fed into notions of public duty and the preservation of local stability. Moreover, it was an important part of the responsibilities of Devon's elite to educate the county's citizens of the socially and morally acceptable codes of conduct in wartime. Therefore, the attempt to monitor and police the patriotism of Devon's population was a natural extension of the responsibilities of the county's notables to administer the social morality of wartime based upon sacrifice and solidarity.

Upon reflection, it is clear that Devon's 'provincial patriots' were similar to the American volunteers who joined the APL because they too were above military age or exempt from military service and were zealous in their 'pursuit of 100 percent

Americanism'.¹⁰ Similarly, the patriotism and loyalty of specific groups were brought into question by the self-directed surveillance of Devon's elite in the pursuit to superintend the nature of patriotism in Devon. The increased levels of Germanophobia led to some of Plymouth's Jewish community being suspected of being German nationals. At the same time, the presence of the Franco-German monks at Buckfast Abbey raised significant concerns by some Devonians who alleged that Buckfast's monks were a risk to national security. Hence, Buckfast's monks were confined to the Abbey's grounds and subject to surveillance by special constables. Comparable concerns were raised about the presence of political CO's at Dartmoor Prison. Concurrently, an additional police presence was requested by DPC to control the behaviour of Portuguese labourers in Dunkeswell due to the fact that the local public house was managed by a woman.

An example of how the members of civil society in Britain perceived themselves as self-appointed policemen of wartime law and order was also noted in Dorset with the recollection of novelist and local notable Thomas Hardy. He recalled in a conversation with poet Robert Graves that he relished his experiences as Chairman of Dorchester's Anti-Profiteering Committee where he 'succeeded in bringing a number of rascally Dorchester tradesmen to book'.¹¹ It is interesting to note that Hardy recognized himself as a sheriff who brought perceived profiteers to account. However, Dorchester's population did not all support Hardy's enthusiasm for administering upon the affairs of Dorchester's traders. Hardy admitted that his attempts to clamp down on the profiteering in Dorchester and round up these unscrupulous tradesmen to face justice had made him 'unpopular, of course'.¹² As an anti-authoritarian perception of the police

¹⁰ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 42.

¹¹ Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Penguin Books, 2000) p. 251.

¹² *Ibid.*

would present them as intrusive arbitrators of law and order, Hardy understood how some would obviously resent his efforts to adjudicate the social morality of wartime.

The ‘provincial patriots’ encountered similar responses from some Devonians in their attempts to mediate the war effort in Devon and continually negotiated with the county’s population to place the national interest above self-interest. In some instances, Devon’s elite struggled to convince some Devonians that this was everybody’s war. Some dissonant responses from Devon as put forward in Chapters 1 and 4 reveal that there were some individuals who considered that the war was not a priority. Various Devonians interpreted the efforts of the local notables to mediate upon the processes of mobilization as forms of imposition. The testimonials from some Devonians reveal that the efforts of the ‘provincial patriots’ were perceived to be a meddling influence upon their lives in wartime. It could be ventured that Reynolds’s description of Devon’s elite was also an observation that some Devonians saw them as armchair patriots that evoked a negative Home Front alongside the representation of the ‘shirker’ and the ‘profiteer’.¹³ This explains the hesitation and indifference expressed by some Devonians when faced with the appeals for mobilization. Furthermore, the ambiguity present in some Devonian responses proved it was difficult for the county’s elite to superintend the nature of patriotism in Devon. As arbiters of the war effort, the ‘provincial patriots’ understood that their self-appointed authority had distinct limitations. In several cases, their jurisdiction was the subject of criticism from some Devonians. Upon review of the cases on the Tiverton Tribunal, Tiverton’s Mayor revealed that the Tribunal’s decisions, ‘though often unpalatable, were generally accepted without murmur’.¹⁴

¹³ John Horne, ‘Soldiers, Civilians and the Warfare of Attrition: Representations of Combat in France, 1914-1918’ in F. Coetze and M. Shevin-Coetze eds., *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995) p. 224.

¹⁴ Gregory, *Recollections of a Country Editor*, p. 63.

This thesis examining the wartime experiences of Devon's elite to mobilize Devonians reveals the deep frustration they encountered in their attempts to reconcile the tension between individual and national survival. This tension was, in many cases, an unresolved dilemma throughout the war despite the best efforts of the 'provincial patriots'. They struggled to convince some Devonians to accept the wartime necessity to sacrifice individual priorities for the national interest. In many cases, the engagement of Devon's population with some forms of wartime mobilization was not easily acquired. The evidence from Devon generates enquiries about the effectiveness of Devon's elite as intermediaries of the war effort across the county. The displays of support for the Devonshire Regiments and the accomplishments of Devon's war charities do not indicate a general disaffection towards the war effort from Devonians. However, the lack of effective co-ordination amongst Devon's elite helps to explain the varied success in recruitment efforts in some parishes and districts inside the county's administrative boundaries. Another explanation as to why Devon's notables were not universally successful across Devon was that they were not a co-ordinated group. A reading of Reynolds's definition of Devon's elite as the 'superintendents of patriotism' would suggest they were a homogenous group similar to a local police force. However, to presume this of Devon's elite is to impose upon them an artificial cohesion. Instead, Devon's elite were a diverse assembly of individuals that did not continuously work under a spirit of wartime co-operation. There has been significant doubt cast upon how united the civilian populations of the belligerent nations were in wartime.¹⁵ Some of Devon's elite possessed a degree of independence from other members of the county's elite concerning how to manage the demands of war in Devon.

¹⁵ Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, 'Conclusion', in J. Winter and J-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 472.

One of the important themes of this thesis is that there did not appear to be a singular ‘totalizing logic’ of mobilization disseminated by Devon’s elite. Similarly, Jay Winter and Antoine Prost remark that that there was no singular war culture.¹⁶ Instead, they argue that there were war cultures and that there was a different colouration to war cultures in rural settings than urban settings.¹⁷ Therefore, with a few exceptions, the trans-national historiography of the Home Front has not taken into account the variation between urban and rural localities.¹⁸ Instead, there is a focus on the wartime experiences of urban communities and their responses to the processes of mobilization.¹⁹ However, this study of Devon’s rural and urban localities during the First World War is sceptical of the understanding of a singular ‘totalizing logic’ that supposedly permeated mobilization efforts. Just as there were different war cultures, there appeared to be multiple ‘logics’ of mobilization in Devon. Devon’s elite were agents of a multitude of ‘logics’ of mobilization, which were also contested in a variety of ways by parts of Devon’s population, who often developed their own rationalisations for abstaining from the behaviours that the ‘provincial patriots’ prescribed for them.

It is equally important to remember that these self-appointed agents of the war effort possessed individual opinions, agendas, concerns and varied senses of authority. However, the authority of Devon’s elite was challenged because they were perceived to be representatives of the state. This was reflected in the idiosyncratic manner that

¹⁶ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 164-165, Winter and Robert, ‘Conclusion’, p. 473.

¹⁷ Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, pp. 164-165.

¹⁸ Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. by Arnold Pomerans (Providence: Berg, 1985), Robert G. Moeller, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914-1924: A Study of the Rhineland and Westphalia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), Keith Grieves, ‘The quiet of the country and the restless excitement of the towns: rural perspectives on the home front, 1914-1918’ in M. Tebbutt ed., *Rural and Urban Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (Manchester: Conference of Regional and Local Historians, 2004) pp. 79-97, Benjamin Ziemann, *War Experiences in Rural Germany, 1914-1923*, trans. by Alex Skinner (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

¹⁹ Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, p. 165.

Devon's tribunals approached appeals for exemption and the challenges that Sir Ian Heathcoat-Amory, the DAT's Chairman, faced when adjudicating upon the claims for exemption. However, Heathcoat-Amory was also in a difficult position with his responsibilities at JHC's factory, balancing his own interests, the priorities of his workforce and those of the WO. Some of Devon's elite did not support all the measures introduced in the name of the war effort. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Beer Parish Council did not support the intensification of voluntary recruitment efforts which was advocated by Devon's elite. This was also reflected in Hardy's recollection when he contended that to be the Anti-Profiteering Committee's Chairman was 'a hundred times better than sitting on a Military Tribunal and sending young men to war who did not want to go'.²⁰ It is clear Hardy believed that he should not hold the responsibility to administer over the applications for appeal. Instead, he undertook an alternative but recognised form of war work. In Devon, the mosaic of diverse responses to different schemas of mobilization indicates that Devonians employed alternative strategies to manoeuvre through the challenges of wartime.

This thesis has provided a critical reflection upon local power dynamics in Devon between the county's elite and Devon's population during the war. The way in which Devon's populace participated in the war effort was more ambiguous than previous histories of Devon during the Great War have acknowledged. The members of Devon's civic society were aware of the effects of mobilization upon the social and economic composition of Devon. For instance, Chapter 4 reveals that Fortescue along with other notables had serious concerns about the state of Devon during 1917 and 1918. Devon's elite carefully navigated the contradictions that existed between the requirements of the Home Front in Devon and those of the military. Consequently, this thesis shows that

²⁰ Graves, *Goodbye to All That*, p. 251.

Devon's elite were not unified under all the calls for mobilization and the wartime measures introduced by the state. Maureen Healy's study of Vienna during the Great War illustrates the stark contrast of the 'home front of the 1914 imagination with the reality of the home front as it evolved over four and a half years'.²¹ The same stark contrast can be said of the campaigns of the 'provincial patriots' to mobilize the people of Devon because the elite were not always clearly understood and did not comprehensively unify the county's populace under shared wartime responsibilities. Chapters 1 and 2 emphasized the distinct limitations of the processes of self-mobilization in Devon and confirm that self-mobilization was an uneven process.²² Likewise, the heightened demands of remobilization during 1917 and 1918 were neither unanimously well received by Devon's population nor endorsed by all of the county's notables. Undeniably, the success of mobilizing Devonians across the county was more complex than Bonnie White suggests. This thesis reveals that Devon's elite had to trim their high ambitions and expectations of what some forms of mobilization would achieve in the county. From 1914 to 1918, the striking contrast between the aspirations of mobilization expressed in the appeals of Devon's elite and the reality of how Devonians responded to these appeals are a major thread in this thesis.

The chronological structure employed in this thesis has helped to distinguish the effectiveness of different forms of mobilization across Devon's rural and urban districts. The nature of urban mobilization in Devon was not necessarily mirrored in the success of mobilization in the county's rural localities. Through understanding mobilization as a system of projects and processes, the evidence from Devon reveals the strengths and limitations of different forms of mobilization amongst Devonians. A benefit of applying

²¹ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 300.

²² John Horne, 'Public Opinion and Politics' in J. Horne ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) p. 283.

a chronological approach in this study is that it identifies not only the evolutions on the Home Front in Devon during the First World War but also the continuations from 1914 to 1918. The success of charitable efforts in Devon presented in this thesis reinforces the strength of the humanitarian nature of Devon's patriotism. There were many Devonians who were more prepared to give to the war effort in the form of charitable efforts rather than give their lives. This demonstrates that throughout 1914 to 1918, a voluntary ethos continued to resonate amongst Devonians and the appeals for self-mobilization. Chapter 4 revealed how the success of War Loan and War Bond campaigns in Devon helped to underscore the willingness of Devonians to support the war effort through charitable efforts and economic mobilization. Accordingly, some schematics of mobilization were more successful than others in Devon during the First World War. A further continuity across this chronological structure which also acts as one of the analytical threads of this thesis is the tension between individual priorities and national ones. Individual priorities in many instances did undermine the importance of national survival. Devon's fishermen were concerned about the survival of their livelihoods through the war. This was also noticeable in Ilfracombe where attempts to preserve an atmosphere of 'Business as Usual' achieved mixed success and went against the grain of this social morality of wartime which condemned the holiday industry as a frivolous distraction. Yet, the persistence of individual survival was evident with the compensation cases from various agencies in Devon.

Jean-Louis Robert and Winter suggest that 'there is a clear chronological divide' in the history of London, Paris and Berlin during the war.²³ From 1916 until the Armistice, the populations of London and Paris had the 'capacity, both material and administrative, to

²³ Jean-Louis Robert and Jay Winter, 'Conclusions: towards a social history of capital cities at war' in J. Winter and J.-L. Robert eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 531.

respond to wartime tensions and conflicts'.²⁴ However, Berlin's authorities were not as fortunate as those in Paris and London.²⁵ The same was also true of Vienna.²⁶ The successes that Devon's elite achieved to resolve the tension between individual priorities and national ones through continued negotiation underscores the fact that Devon and its population was not a monolithic structure. This is reflected in Richardson's suggestion that a surprise of the war years was the way that Devon's population 'adapted to the altered circumstances and put up with anything and everything so long as we thought it helped to win us the victory'.²⁷ This is not to say that the war did not bring significant social changes to Devon because the war ushered in some social changes that were advocated by the county's elite on a local level. However, to Devonians, the Great War was a period of uncertainty where continuity outweighed change to which they were concerned about how to navigate and survive the war.

The central argument of this thesis is that the 'provincial patriots' struggled to convey to Devon's population the importance of wartime directives whilst superintending patriotism on a local level. As the Home Front evolved in Devon from 1914 to 1918, the wartime experience of Devon's elites was characterized by the constant negotiation to convince Devonians to place the national interest above self-interest. The perspectives and evidence presented in this microhistory of Devon during the First World War is part of the historiographical move away from the illusionary veil of a unitary national experience. Moreover, it is an addition to the trans-national historiography on the nature of mobilization in specific localities beyond and below the nations. By scrutinising the effectiveness of mobilization and analysing mobilization as a process in Devon, this

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, pp. 300-313.

²⁷ Richardson, *Through war to peace, 1914-1918*, p. 71.

examination stresses that the war effort in Devon was neither an effective unifying principle nor a cohesive phenomenon. The involvement of Devonians with the war effort was informed, in many instances, by what was considered to be an appropriate contribution. This thesis has shown there were some corners of Devon from 1914 to 1918 that were at least partially resistant to the logic of modern industrial war.

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