

Centenary of Outbreak of World War One

Materials and pictures from service on 14th September 2014



Letter Home

**from Pte David Miles 7th Beds
to his mother**

Mrs Miles 14 Baker Street Hertford
Hertford Mercury 25th September 1915

"We are in the trenches again where there was once a village, but it has been blown to the ground by the Germans.

"It is pitiful to see the towns and villages smashed to atoms and there are churches with hardly one stone on another. The sights are awful as you march from the trenches to the rest camp which is eight miles. You see the graves of our own brave boys alongside the road with a wooden cross on them and also their caps which tell you a tale when you can see a round hole in them. Also you see the French soldiers buried the same way but their graves are livened up with fancy iron wreaths.

"There is not a sign of the population in the villages and towns only the trenches occupied by the 1st Beds a fortnight ago. I am on a machine gun so I don't have to show myself as we dig our guns in the embankment and only fire at night.

"We have plenty of chums in the dug-outs where we sleep, what with rats, fleas etc but we get rid of them when we go into the rest camp."

Ed: Peter Ruffles, who read this letter during the service, told me that Mr Miles survived the war and returned to live in Hertford to a ripe old age.

Ye Hertford Lads

– to be sung to 'John Peel'
Words by Pte C Hattham 1st Herts Reg.
Hertford Mercury 18th December 1915

Ye Hertford Lads make a glorious show
As singing and jesting on they go
Then here's Hurrah for the joy to know
That our boys are the Lads of Old Hertford.

Ye Hertford Maids come forth to see
Our Godly Lads in their bravery
As they march past sing and dance with me
For the love of the Lads of Old Hertford.

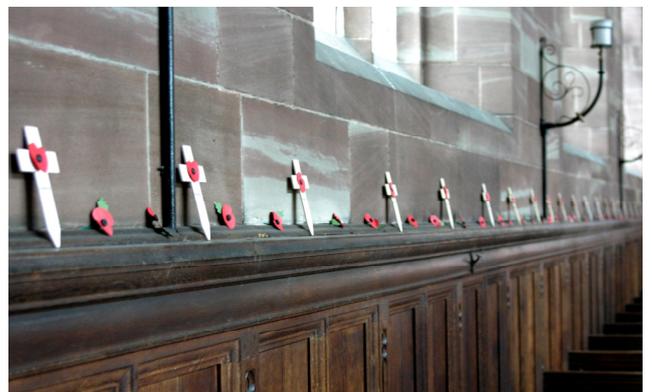
Ye Hertford Bells that we know so well
Loud be your tunes and your voices swell
Ring our and peal as at eve you tell
Of the fame of the Lads of Old Hertford.

Ye Hertford Gloves be soft to feel
But hard in grip as the hands of steel
That grasp the foe as he comes to heel
At the call of the Lads of Old Hertford.

Ye Hertford Hops for the brewing of ale
That keeps our heroes hearty and hale
Gove of your best when we tell you the tale
Of the deeds of the Lads of Old Hertford.

Ye Hertford Lads keep ever in sight
Your hearths and homes and with all your might
Fight as our fathers for the right
And the name of the Lads of Old Hertford

(Pte Hattam recovered from Rheumatic Fever, serving nearly five years with 1st Herts before transferring to East Anglian Signals, R.E. then back to 2nd Herts and then to 1st Battalion).



Thanks are due to Jean Riddell for researching and transcribing the Mercury archives