

## First World War Community History Sources

The First World War was of course a military campaign, and much of the attention paid to it focuses on the soldiers and their activities. But the world they left behind carried on and the impact of the war was felt keenly on the Home Front. Many of the records held by Northumberland Archives reflect the experiences of the communities of Northumberland during the War years, and are listed below with a summary of what you might be able to find within them.

**Newspapers.** Local newspapers carried stories from soldiers at the front or during their training. There are also reports of activities for War Charities, like the provision of home comforts for troops at the Front. Occasionally letters from the soldiers are printed and of course the inevitable reports of soldiers killed in action. Occasionally, newspaper accounts feature photographs of lost soldiers.

**School Log Books.** Individuals are not often mentioned by name but the activities of the schools which were at the heart of many communities are reported. Activities reported include the efforts of children to support war charities, the departure of members of staff to join the military and whether the school was taken over by the War Department.

**Parish Magazines** may report on the activities of the parish community and quite often include names of parish members who signed up to fight. There are also many local interest stories from the war years, for example, fundraising for War Charities.

**Company Minute Books** often include information about men working for the company who signed up to fight. Companies would often support War Charities as well and the minute books give information about which charities and what was done to assist them.

**Quarter Session Records** reflect many aspects of civilian life but most particularly criminal cases which can reflect the struggles of those on the home front. They also include details of War Charities which from 1916 had to register with the County Council and the record of which is found within the Quarter Session Papers.

**Petty Sessions and Constabulary Records** record details of legal infringements during the war years, but constabulary records give a fascinating insight to the Home Front via the enforcement of its laws, as well as the registration of aliens detailing everyone of foreign descent in the county.

**Photographs.** These can be a great source of information about people and places during the War years. Subjects might include departure of local men to serve at the Front Home Front activities, Land Army, Peace Teas etc.