

No.5: Holy Trinity – a war-time snap-shot from a century ago

Patients at Marsh Extension Hospital.



Seated—(Second Row)—Corpl. Spencer, Sister Davis, Driver Williams, Sister Cook, Pte. Harris.
The above three Soldiers have received Military Decorations for gallantry.

The photograph above is taken from the Huddersfield War Hospital Magazine, published in February 1918. It shows Holy Trinity's Parish Hall, St James' Marsh, in use as a war hospital which opened a century ago this month, (April 1917).

At the time, the Parish Hall was virtually brand new. It had been opened and dedicated with great pageantry in May 1914 and cost £5000 to construct. The church was still paying off the cost of building it. It was designed to accommodate a 'fully graded' Sunday School for over 500 children, and included a multi-purpose hall, licenced as St James's for public worship on the first floor that seated 430 including its gallery; various meeting rooms spread over its 4 floors including full kitchen and cloakroom facilities; a billiards room and even sports changing rooms and baths in the basement.

By the beginning of 1917, the numbers of casualties needing hospital treatment from the 'Great War' was continuing to grow. The average time taken in hospital to recover from war-time injuries was 34 days. Britain's hospitals were unable to accommodate all the injured and special war hospitals were established. The Huddersfield War Hospital was set up by public subscription at a cost of £30,000 and opened in October 1914 on the Royd's Hall estate in Paddock. The mansion was used to house the nursing staff and temporary buildings were constructed in the grounds, eventually providing for nearly 2000 patients.

Holy Trinity's Parish Hall was requisitioned as a 93 bed extension to the hospital at Royd's Hall in April 1917. Members of the church congregation committed themselves to providing games, tobacco, refreshments and entertainments. A canteen was run each morning and evening by the ladies of the parish in the 'Recreation Room', organised and provided for by Miss Middlemost. Cakes, jam etc. were made by the ladies. Easy chairs, cushions, flowers, pictures and a gramophone

were also provided to make the patients as comfortable as possible. The billiards room, was reported as being 'very popular' amongst the patients.

Services were held each week for the patients by the curate, Rev Hubert Spencer, who became an assistant chaplain to the Military Hospitals. Whist drives and concerts were also put on to entertain the troops. The war hospital magazine from which the photo above was taken, suggested that it provided cheerful and comfortable care for the many that passed through its doors. After the war, the hospital closed in January 1919.

The Parish Hall had been sorely missed by the church during the war. Services had to be relocated to the Marsh school and temporary premises found for the Sunday schools. At the end of the war, the Parish Magazine reported that the "building is not yet 5 years old but it has had the wear of many more years than that." The Hall was returned for Parish use in July 1919.

It is very hard for us, in modern-day peace-time to imagine the personal pain and sacrifice of those during war-time. A story from our church family history might help to illustrate. Arthur Calvert Sharpe, of Mountjoy Road, was the youngest son of the previous Vicar. He was married to Mary Middlemost, who was a member of a long-time Holy Trinity family. He was Treasurer of the Parish Hall Committee and worked tirelessly for its opening, construction and establishment as a place to serve the local community of Marsh and in particular to provide its young men with a place where they could meet and enjoy their leisure time. Arthur and Mary's first son Arthur Noel Sharpe died in service in the war, at the Battle of the Somme on September 3rd 1916 and is recorded on Holy Trinity's War Memorial.

The original building cost of the Parish Hall was finally paid off in 1919 and after its re-conversion back to its original purpose, it began to serve the local community again. This newspaper clipping reflects its more positive, peace-time purpose.

Andy Barber
April '17

A MARSH "SOCCER" CLUB. 17.04.26



HOLY TRINITY A.F.C. Photo by Gledhill.

Names (reading from left to right):

Back Row: G. Greenwood, W. P. Wood, N. Royston, G. Schofield, H. Jones, F. Marsden, and S. Brown.

Second Row: L. Smith (captain).

Third Row: J. Martin, F. Middleton, A. Roberts, and E. Brearley.

The Trinitarians have been members of the Affiliated Sunday School League since 1924, and have a junior team in the Red Triangle League. Their president, Mr. R. A. Bell, is an ardent and zealous worker, who receives capable support from the treasurer (Mr. L. H. Sykes) and the secretary (Mr. H. Jones). Attached to the club is an institute, where every convenience is to be found for the team's recreation, baths, etc. Their ground is recognised as one of the best in the League; it is situated in Luck Lane, Marsh.