

# *A Village Diary*

*Litton Cheney*

*during the*

*First World War*

*1914 – 1918*

*A diary compiled by Paul Kingston  
of Litton Cheney in 2018*

*to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary  
of the signing of the Armistice on  
11<sup>th</sup> November 1918*

## LITTON CHENEY IN WARTIME - 1914-18

### 1914

**15 January:** Elizabeth Moores married Harry Lock.

**January:** Dairy person wanted by Mr Legg at Parks Dairy.

**February:** Reverend Crick bought Golly Knapp and land.

**February:** Baker (aged 18-20) wanted at Moore's bakery in Litton.

**February:** A Missionary lecture was given in the school room by the Rector of Compton Valence with the aid of lantern slides, describing his work in Uganda.

**March:** Cattistock Foxhounds met in Litton, led by Captain Palmer.

**April:** Proceedings against the Friendly Society Secretary, Mr Brinkworth for two offences under the Friendly Society Act 1896. He was accused of failing to send annual returns of receipts and expenditure to the Chief Registrar and failing to send a report on the condition of the Society. He was fined £1 in each case.

**April:** Dairy person wanted by Mr Roper at Coombe Farm.

**09 April:** Hannah Elizabeth Warren, widow of John, died, aged 79.

**12 April:** Ethel Cook married Walter Masters.

**26 April:** Lilian Derriman married Ernest Roper.

**05 May:** Culmstock Otter Hounds met at Litton Cheney bridge.

**7 May** Jane Abbot Gale died, aged 86.

**May:** Friendly Society procession. After the church service the usual perambulation of the village followed. After the club dinner, sports were held and maypole dancing by a dozen schoolgirls attired in white with red, white and blue sashes. A proper dance followed in the evening.

**June:** An open air meeting organised by the West Dorset Liberal Association was held at Cross Tree. The address was on the land and housing policy of the government.

**June:** Charles Palmer (39), a sergeant, discharged from the army (Dorsetshire Regiment) having served for 21 years.

### **July: The Great War Commenced.**

**July:** The men employed at Dale and Whetham's farm, with their wives and families, enjoyed the generosity of their masters, the occasion being an outing to Weymouth. The company assembled for dinner and tea, the remaining part of the day being pleasantly occupied in various ways.

**July:** Evangeline Bligdon died.

**September:** Florence Ellery, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ellery of Litton married Oliver Godden at the Primitive Methodist Church in Bournemouth.

**September:** Mr and Mrs Richard Hansford celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary, with the last 21 years spent at Looke Farm.

**September:** Edgar Bowditch, farmer, enlisted in the army.

**September:** Charles Palmer rejoined the army, having left in June.

**September:** Reginald Peach (20), labourer, enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery.

**October:** Stephen Vine of Looke farm was selling 8-10 tons of cider apples.

**October:** A respectable girl was wanted for dairy work at Parks Dairy.

**November:** A labourer was wanted, with two sons, one for dairy work and the other with horses by Mr Hussey-Freke at Coombe Farm.

**November:** William Northover was summoned by William Miller (assistant overseer) for non-payment of poor rate, amounting to 15s 9d. He was ordered to pay within 14 days.

**November:** A meeting of the Friendly Society was held in the Rectory school room. The president Reverend Crick was in the chair and Arthur Gladwyn was appointed Secretary in place of Mr Brinkworth.

**December:** Sergeant T.F.Fry (Royal Engineers) was home on leave for a few days.

**26 December:** Louis Pitcher died at sea, aged 29 on H.M. transport ship "Dongola". He was the son of Louis Pitcher, baker at White Cross. He was a sergeant farrier 8<sup>th</sup> Battery Royal Field Artillery.

**SCHOOL:** 44 on register and average attendance of 42. Small Population Grant of £20 given.

## 1915

**January:** Louis Crick, 5<sup>th</sup> Cheshire Regiment, son of Reverend Crick of Litton engaged to Winifred Walker.

**January:** The Bridport News reported that the road at Litton Cheney was so rough it should be steamrolled.

**January:** A carter wanted by R.Fry.

**15 January:** Edgar Bowditch (born in Litton) discharged from the Dorsetshire Regiment (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion) on medical grounds.

**February:** A carter wanted by Stephen Vine of Looke Farm.

**February:** A labourer with or without boys wanted by Mr Hussey-Freke at Coombe Farm. The wage was 14s per week.

**March:** Action brought by Mr Roper against Mr Freke for compensation in respect of an accident sustained while employed as a dairyman at Coombe Farm. He was awarded £1 a week from October to March and then 16s a week.

**12 April:** Major William Walker died in East Africa. He was a Major, acting Lieutenant General, 46<sup>th</sup> Punjabis. He was married to Marion, youngest daughter of Reverend Crick, Rector of Litton Cheney and had a one year old daughter.

**12 April:** Emily Webber married Reginal Drake.

**14 April:** Charles Burt (born in Litton) died in England. He enlisted in Misterton and was a private in the Dorsetshire Regiment, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He was born in Litton, the son of Abraham and Sarah Burt.

**22 April:** Sarah Godding died, aged 74.

**02 May:** Alice King married Fred Atkins.

**03 May:** Alfred Peach apprenticed to Wilfred Moores, baker.

**29 May:** Walter Louis Fry died of a wound, aged 18, in France. He was a Private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, West Ontario Regiment, Canadian Infantry. He was the son of George and Annie Fry of the Paddocks.

**June:** An appeal by Mr Freke against the award to Mr Roper in March, in relation to an accident at Coombe Farm was dismissed.

**15 August:** Ronald Baily, Lieutenant, 7<sup>th</sup> Dorset Regiment, son of Mr and Mrs Baily of Litton got engaged to Helen Foster.

**06 September** Ethel Hounsell (25) married Henry Wood (24).

**October:** 2 hay ricks caught fire at Looke farm. The fire was discovered at 5pm and the Bridport Fire Brigade was sent for, but they were unable to save much of the ricks. However, they were able to prevent the flames reaching nearby ricks and the farm buildings.

**October 25:** Sale of 250 Dorset Horn breeding sheep at Baglake Farm, as Edgar Samways was quitting the farm.

**November:** Baglake Farm with house, two cottages, buildings, 332 acres of arable, pasture and meadow land was to be let from April.

**03 December:** Mary Legge Groves (daughter of Major John and Phyllis Groves) died, aged 51.

**December:** Frank Southey (38) enlisted in the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

**December:** Looke Farm with 477 acres of rich meadow, 158 acres arable, two sets of dairys and farm house and building was to be let from Lady Day 1916.

**December:** Arthur Gladwyn (24) joined the army. He served as a gunner in R.G.A., 192 Heavy Battery.

**December:** Charles Sparrow (26), postman, enlisted in the army. He served in the Royal Garrison Artillery.

**13 December:** Roland Moores apprenticed to E. Channon and Sons, motor engineers.

**SCHOOL:** 35 on register (two under fives) and average attendance of 33. Small Population Grant of £20 given.

## 1916

**February:** Five lads from Litton were summoned for using indecent language on 28 January and they each admitted the offence. Reverend Crick pleaded for leniency as they had lost a days work coming to Dorchester. The cases were dismissed on the payment of the costs, 1s each.

**February:** Carter wanted by Mr Freke at Coombe Farm.

**March:** Archie Coombes (24), stockman given a conditional exemption as long as his present employment continued.

**March:** Dairy Manager wanted for 40-50 cows by Mr Vine at Looke Farm.

**March:** Labourer wanted for hedging and other farm work by Mr Samways.

**24 April:** Flora Fry (32) married John Swain (29).

**24 April:** Clara Hounsell (27), eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs F. Hounsell married James Adam (22), section leader of the B.R.C.S., Boulogne, France. Reverend Crick performed the service and the bride was given away by her father. The bridesmaids were Lilian Hounsell (sister) and Mabel Clark (cousin of the bride). Later in the day the couple left for Lambourn, Berkshire for their honeymoon.

**25 April:** Annie Fry Nobbs (26) married Herbert Fry (25).

**May:** Conditional exemptions from military service for R. Drake, carter and Archie Coombes, stockman and a temporary exemption for W. Masters, miller.

**20 May:** Sale of 80 acres of grass keep, by the executors of Mr Vine at Looke Farm.

**31 May: Reginald Northover died, aged 30 on HMS "Queen Mary" in the Battle of Jutland. He was a Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class.**

**June:** Charles George Fry enlisted in the army.

**June:** Walter Moore (39) enlisted in the Army Veterinary Corps.

**July:** George Courtney (20) discharged from the army. He had been in the Wiltshire Regiment (No.2 Infantry Works Company).

**August:** Bridport Fire Brigade were called out to a fire at Higher Coombe, together with 6 scout boys, attached to the brigade.

**August:** An appeal against Archie Coombes, farm bailiff being enlisted for military service was rejected.

**August:** A carpenter was wanted by Mr Fry, builder at The Paddocks.

**24 August: Thomas Weller died, aged 35 in Flanders. He was a Private in the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He was married to Mabel and had four children.**

**September:** Richard Northover summoned for non-payment of the poor rate. It was stated by the overseer that the rate had been paid, but on his application costs totalling 12s 6d were ordered to be paid by the defendant.

**04 September:** Charles Edward Fry of Baglake married Hilda Watson of Edgbaston at St. Simon's Church, Southsea.

**02 October:** Dorset Horn breeding flock, teams of cart horses, heifers and implements sold at Looke Farm.

**October:** Bakers business (10 sacks weekly and groceries) offered to let.

**October:** Charles Palmer awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field.

**December:** W, Dowding, carter given temporary exemption until 01 April, if a substitute not found.

**December:** Edwin Pye, wheelwright given temporary exemption, but a substitute to be found if possible.

**December:** H. Fry, horseman given a conditional exemption.

**December:** T. Thorner's exemption case was adjourned till the next meeting of the Rural District Tribunal.

**December:** Daniel Hunt charged with cruelty to a mare.

**1917**

**15 February** James Derby died, aged 57.

**February:** Man wanted for farm work and to look after sheep at Looke Farm.

**04 March:** George Pitcher died, aged 76.

**25 March: William Chainey died in Mesopotamia. He was a private in the Dorsetshire Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.**

**31 March:** Robert Masters, miller, died aged 65.

**8 April:** Gladys Trevett (daughter of Alfred, labourer and Rosa Kate) and Robert Fry (son of Herbert, carter and Annie) baptised.

**17 April: Charles Fry killed, aged 35 at Arras, France. He was a Lieutenant, 23<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He was the son of Thomas and Anna Fry of Baglake Farm House.**

**17 April: William Darby died aboard SS Calliope, when she was torpedoed by a German submarine. He was a Lance Corporal in the Royal Marine Artillery.**

**19 April:** Bessy Darby (32) married George Churchill (30).

**May:** Military appeal allowed against Alfred Pitcher (35) of the Paddocks, licensed carrier, on the contention that the work could be done by a woman or man over military age

**May:** Strong boy wanted for milking by Mr Saunders at Park's Farm.

**May:** Dale and Whetham appealed for William Dowding (18), carter at Cross Tree Farm to **have further exemption. However, he had joined up, as a substitute was found.**

**May:** George Fry, wheelwright successfully appealed for Edwin Pye, carpenter and wheelwright to have exemption granted up to 30 September.

**June:** Painter wanted by Mr Fry, builder of The Paddocks.

**July:** Appeal for re-hearing of exemption case for Alfred Pitcher, licensed motor carrier. This was causing alarm at Litton and influential letters were received as he was the only carrier to Dorchester. He carried milk which relieved other men and carried food to the village. The appeal was refused.

**August:** Alfred Pitcher (35), licensed motor carrier enlisted in R.A.S.C.

**September:** W.Moore reported as wounded.

**October:** Mr Snook started dancing classes in the school room.

**10 October:** Turner's farm (26 acres, water meadow, pasture, stone house, cottage and premises) bought by E. Samways of Dowerfield for £1350. He also bought the adjoining Rowden Farm (33 acres of pasture and meadow land) for £1300.

**04 November:** Minnie Roach married William Damen.

**November:** Exemption from military service given for Edwin Page.

**21 November :** Eliza Legg died, aged 76.

**30 November: Frederick Gale (living in Litton, born in Stoke Abbot) killed in action in Flanders. He was a private in the Dorsetshire Regiment and later in the Somerset Light Infantry, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion.**

**December:** Edwin Pye (33), carpenter and wheelwright of the Paddocks appealed for an extension to his military exemption but this was dismissed.

The school had an average attendance of 25.

## **1918**

**February:** Middle aged woman wanted to milk and look after house by Miss Bligdon.

**19 March: Arthur Somers Billett was killed, aged 36 aboard S.S. Burnstone when she was torpedoed by a German submarine. He was a gunner, Royal Marine Artillery. He was the husband of Laura Billett of White Cross.**

**13 April: Bernard Cox (Litton resident, born in Puncknowle) died in Flanders. He enlisted in Bridport and was a private in the Devonshire Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.**

**21 April: Albert Hansford died in France, aged 31. He was born in Litton, son of Henry, farmer and Mary Ann Hansford. He had gone to Canada and joined the Canadian Infantry (Saskatchewan Regiment), 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion.**

**April:** William Bolt (34), wholesale potato, vegetable and fruit merchant who conveyed mail to Litton given six months temporary exemption.

**May:** Appeal for George Saunders of Park's Farm to be given conditional exemption, as being in a certified occupation.

**May:** Help wanted, farmer's daughter preferred, willing to milk by Mrs Saunders at Park's Farm.

**20 May:** a son born to Mr and Mrs Masters at the Mill.

**22 May:** William Bennett died, aged 59.

**01 June: Albert Collins died in Mesopotamia. He was a private in the Dorsetshire Regiment, 1/4<sup>th</sup> battalion.**

**18 June: John Mills (born in Litton) died, aged 39, in Flanders. He was born in Litton, son of William (miller and journeyman) and Mary Mills. He was a sergeant in the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery.**

**28 June:** Thomas Trevett (44) joined the Royal Air Force.

**02 August: Arthur Prout died, aged 24 in Mesopotamia. He was born in Litton, son of Thomas and Mary Prout. He was a private in the Dorsetshire Regiment (1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion).**

**10 August:** William Atkins died, aged 79.

August: Cook, servant and young girl to train as a parlour maid wanted by Mrs Walker at the Rectory.

**24 September:** Sale of dairy cows and young stock, teams of cart horses, implements, machinery and dairy utensils at Cross Tree Farm, following the sale of the estate by Mr Dale.

**30 September:** William Hounsell, of the Paddocks, died.

**30 September:** Sale of dairy herd, teams of young working cart horses, farm implements and machinery at Manor Farm. Mr Walden was quitting the farm.

**12 October:** Private Charles Fry discharged from the army, due to deformity of head and neck of femur.

**25 October:** William Godding died, aged 79.

**25 October:** A flock of Dorset Horn sheep and lambs sold by George Fry.

**29 October:** Ethel Wood died, daughter of Mr and Mrs Hounsell, aged 28.

**02 November:** Reverend Crick sold glebe lands, consisting of 107 acres of water meadow, pasture and arable land, together with a dairy house and garden.

**02 November:** Arthur Thorner married Eva Barnes. He was a corporal in the war, serving in France and his health was considerably affected by exposure to mustard gas.

**11 November 1918: Armistice Day.**

**02 December:** Lilian Darby (22) married Stephen Pearson (27).

**December:** Foreman or Bailiff (married) wanted by Mr Lee at Looke Farm.

**11 December:** Fanny Walden of the Manor Farm House, died, aged 62. Her husband had planned to quit the farm and her son was serving in France.

**December:** Charity Dairy to be sold, as Mr Gale was retiring

The school had an average attendance of 29.

**Peace returned to Litton Cheney, but sadly there were those who would never return to The Valley of the Bride.**

Compiled by Paul Kingston, School Lane, Litton Cheney – Our grateful thanks.