

Seagoe Parish Magazine.

JUNE, 1920.

IN this issue of the Magazine we begin the publication of a most interesting and important series of Letters, very kindly placed at our disposal by Lieut.-Colonel S. W. Blacker, D.S.O. The letters constitute a continuous record of the doings of our famous "Ninth Battalion," from the day they landed in France up to March, 1917. when Colonel Blacker relinquished his command. The letters are published as they were written home, and therefore present us with a succession of vivid pictures of the War Experiences of our men. As there is likely to be an increased demand for copies of the Magazine during the publication of the Letters, will those who wish to obtain such copies please leave their orders at Kyle's Grocery Stores, 16 Bridge Street, Portadown, or with the Magazine distributor of their district. We fear it may not be possible to supply extra copies of the complete Magazine, but it will be possible to get extra copies of the Local Matter, including the Letters, at a charge of 2d for each copy.

Sunday School Excursion.

The excursion will take place (D.V.) to Warrenpoint on Thursday, June 17th. The prices for Tickets will be—Sunday School Children under 15, 2/6 (including 2 Refreshments); Sunday School Scholars over 15, Members of Bible Classes and Teachers, 4/6 (including 2 Refreshments). Adults and outsiders, 5/-. The Sunday School Children with their teachers will assemble at the Parish Church at 9 a.m., when a short service will be held, and then forming into procession they will march to the station. The train will leave Portadown at 9-30 a.m., and will leave Warrenpoint on the return journey at 7-30 p.m. The Tickets for the Children will be on Sale at the various Sunday Schools on the Monday evening preceding the Excursion at 8 p.m. Tickets for Adults are now on Sale from the Superintendents of the Sunday Schools. Adults should secure their Tickets in good time, as they are strictly limited in number.

Seagoe Day School.

The Annual Examination in Religious Knowledge was held in Seagoe School on Monday, May 10th, the Diocesan Inspector, Rev. J. Gordon, M.A., has reported as follows—

On the whole the Examination in this School was very satisfactory, giving evidence of careful teaching.

Junior Division—Full Marks and Certificates were won by Lily Hutchinson, Jack Hill, Fred Crossan, Wm. Livingstone and Thos. Hall. Certificates were also awarded to Elsie McNally, Nellie White, Eva Dickson,

Caroline Guy, Jack Best, David Rowland, Maggie Coulter, Maud Coulter, Wm. McMurray.

Senior Division—Full Marks and Certificates—Amy Holmes (Monitress), Isabella Best, Norman Walker and Willie White. Certificates were awarded to Lily Sweeney, Hilda Walker, Hugh Costello, Sarah Coulter, Edna Watson, Edna Best.

PARISH REGISTER for MAY.

Baptisms.

Rainey—May 1st, 1920, Robert George, son of Samuel and Elizabeth Rainey, of Edenderry.

Sponsors—Sarah Rainey, Elizabeth Rainey.

Anderson—May 1st, 1920, Abraham, son of Francis and Susan Anderson, of Drumgor.

Sponsors—Martha Jane Bickett, Susan Anderson.

PRIVATE BAPTISM.

McNeill—May 22nd, 1920, Edith, twin daughter of Samuel George and Hannah Elizabeth McNeill, of Ballymacrandle.

Marriages.

Craig and Guy—May 1st, 1920. Andrew Craig, of Portadown, to Elizabeth Anna Guy, of Ballyhannon.

Porter and Watson—May 12th, 1920, David Porter, of Kernan, to Anne Elizabeth Watson, of Muckery, Parish of Drumcree,

Burials.

Ross—April 29th, Emily Elizabeth Ross, of Upper Seagoe, aged 6 months.

Forsythe—May 23rd, Emily Jane Forsythe, of Upper Seagoe, aged 53 years.

ITEMS.

Seagoe Church Grounds are looking very neat, and the Grave-plots are being carefully tended.

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Seagoe Choir drove in a Char-a-Banc to Dromore for the Choral Festival.

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Seagoe has had its share of the dull weather, and farming operations are behind-hand.

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Seagoe won a good share of Prizes at the Portadown Show, on June 3rd.

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Seagoe Magazine for May was sold out in two days.

Seagoe Choir sang a pretty Whitsuntide Carol on Whitsunday. It was taken from the May number of Seagoe Magazine.

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Seagoe Schoolboys have got their school garden into fine order.

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Seagoe Puzzles in last Magazine have created much interest. One competitor has made 105 words out of the word "Portadown."

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Seagoe War Memorial is being prepared for erection by Messrs. Purdy & Millard, of Belfast.

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Seagoe heartily congratulates its neighbour, the Rev. F. J. Halahan, M.A., M.C., Rector of Drumcree, on the distinguished compliment paid him by the Clergy and Laity of the Arch-Diocese of Armagh, in placing him first in the voting list for the vacant Bishopric of Armagh.

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Seagoe Mission Week Collection was made on Saturday, May 22nd. The following sums have already been received—Levaghery, S. & J. Jennett and S. McDowell, 10/9. Tarsan—Miss M. Coulter, 5/9. Foundry Street—Miss C. Kirby, 2/5. Railway Street, —Miss S. Cartmill, 10/9. Drumgor.—Miss L. McClelland, 16/3. Knockmena and Clanrolla—Miss E. Webb, 9/6. Lylo—Miss E. Webb, 8/6. Balteagh and Glasson—Miss C. Anderson, 14/- Killicomaine —Misses N. Hamill and I. Best, 13/10. Seagoe—Miss G. Porter, 8/6. Ballyhannon—Miss E. Elliott, 9/-. Drumlisnagrilly and Drumnacanvey—Miss G. Best, 1/6. Knock and Hacknahay—Miss Lily England, 18/-. Total, £6 8s 9d.

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Seagoe, as a Parish, has not as yet done anything for the Diocesan Clerical Income Augmentation Scheme. Lt. Colonel Blacker has subscribed £50. We hope the Parish generally will follow the good example he has set, and help forward this useful and necessary scheme.

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Seagoe heard the Cuckoo first on April 19th. It was first heard by Mr. Robert Price, at Ballinacor.

Hibernian Bible Society.

We have received the following sums collected for the Bible Society (a book prize is given by the Society to each collector of 5s.) Hilda Mayes, 6s; Annie Currie, 5s 4d. Mabel Dickson, Thomas Ryans, Cissy Currie, Thomas Forsythe, John Johnston. Sadie Maginnis, Lily England, Georgina Porter, Robert Richardson, Charles Twinem, Annie Fraeburn, 5s each.

Bobbie Hughes, 2s 9d; Hugh Costello, 1s 6d.

Nine Books have not yet been returned. Collectors will please return them at once.

July Anniversary Service.

An Anniversary Service will (D.V.) be held in Seagoe Parish Church, on Sunday Evening, July 11th, at 7 p.m. The preacher will be the Rev. R. Bullick Cooke, M.A., Rector of All Saint's Church, Belfast.

Seagoe Annual Report.

The Report will be circulated in a few days. It is the Report for the year 1919, under the new arrangement, whereby all accounts close on December 31st, instead of at Easter. There is an increase in the Sustentation Fund, but the subscriptions still stand in many cases at a very low level. A few doubled their subscriptions this year. General Ricardo in a speech at the recent General Synod stated that in his Parish in the Diocese of Derry, they had agreed to assess themselves for Sustentation at the following rate—Landholders, 2s per acre, per annum, and Industrial workers and wage earners at 3d per £ weekly. A farmer owning 30 acres would at this rate pay towards the upkeep of his Church £3 per year; and a wage earner earning £3 per week would pay 9d per week, or about £2 per annum. This is regarded as the normal minimum by the Churchmen of the County Derry.

If the subscriptions to Seagoe Sustentation Fund were at the same rate as in General Ricardo's Parish our Sustentation Fund would reach £650 each year.

Seagoe Puzzles.

HIDDEN TOWNS AND RIVERS.

- 1 The better the Reaper, the better the harvest.
- 2 Thou shalt not slay or kill thy neighbour.
- 3 An afternoon nap lessens fatigue.
- 4 That ship caught a gust of wind, and heeled right over.

WORD DIAMONDS.

- 1 A personal pronoun; a termination; a country; a noise; a letter of the alphabet.
- 2 A letter denoting a part of the world; a jar; to hide; a number; a letter.

Answers to Puzzles in May Number.

FAMOUS PEOPLE.

Gladstone, Garibaldi, Asquith, Wolsey, Melchizedek, Chamberlain.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

1	O		B
2	A	liwah	L
3	R	afi	A
4	R	omantic	C
5	I	l	K
6	C	arab	E
7	K	eepe	R

We got 103 words of more than one letter out of Portadown.

WITH THE "NINTH" IN FRANCE,

By Lieut.-Col. S. W. BLACKER, D.S.O.

FOREWORD.

I have been asked by the Rector to write something for the Seagoe Magazine on the doings of the 9th in France. I have come to the conclusion that Extracts from letters written home from day to day would be perhaps the best record of the doings of the Battalion.

These letters cover the period from October, 1915, till March, 1917, and are just a daily record of our life out there. They were written under various circumstances and conditions, and of course without any idea of publication.

Naturally there are many abbreviations and allusions which will puzzle the ordinary reader, but I think any of my old comrades in the 9th will be able to understand them, and I hope they may serve to call to their minds memories and recollections of our life in France and Flanders.

I would ask the indulgence of all in publishing these somewhat egotistical records, but would ask you to bear in mind the conditions under which they were written. S.W.B.

October 3rd, 1915.

Battalion moved out with no prisoners, no absentees, and no one drunk.

October 4th and 5th—[Havre.]

Believe we have about 20 hours in train to-morrow. All fit and well. We disembarked at 7 a.m., having spent Sunday in Southampton Dock. Came to rest camp, about two miles from dock—Havre, I believe, etc.—We left Southampton at 8-30 p.m.; small boat; such a pack; barely standing room, 37 officers and 1,340 men. Some of the R.A. came over in our ship. No Regulars, except a Brigade-Major. We were lucky in the weather, sea like glass, no one ill. Fine to-day, men seem perky. We passed through miles of dock, packed with stores of all sorts. Slept from 9-0 to 5-0 a.m. on the sofa. One of the Saunderson's was Embarking Officer at Southampton. 31 officers slept in saloon on lower deck, with all ports closed. About 3,000 in this camp, and 100 officers.

October 6th—[Raineville.]

We are in the region we desired; 20 miles in rear; a wearisome night journey, detraining at 3 a.m., in dark; 8 mile march and into billets. Not very wonderful for the men. Somewhat dirty barns. We are in Curé's house, quite all right; men a bit tired after three disturbed nights. "Downs" here, others about 3 miles away. Robin FitzRoy came to see me where we disembarked at Rest Camp. In charge of an anti-air craft gun. Everything very tumbled down and dilapidated here owing to men all away for the last 13 months. Germans once came within a mile of the place.

The Curé has a Panhard Car, iron tyres, going well, which he has had since 1891! He's rather a nice old thing, most obliging and kind. Weather warm and nice. I went with Fergie to settle about billets, etc. No interpreter at present, and no one

else who could speak the language. Fergie hard at work. At port of disembarkation he picked up a machine gun, and heaps of odds and ends. All well and fit, including myself. A Mrs. and Miss Sydney Pitt provided tea at the station for men and officers, at 2d a head; both rather amusing and pleasant. All came in one long train of 46 coaches.

October 7th.

Men quite recovered to-day. Took them for 5 mile march to stretch their legs. General Nugent came round this a.m.—programme to stay here for a week, then go for instruction into Trenches, and then after a week of that do Divisional Training. Met Clive—liason officer between Joffre and French. Most interesting. German losses in Champagne alone, 40,000 killed.

We all slept very well and are quite comfortable. Clive quite sanguine as to how things are going—in a sane way. Our Army Commander, "Munro," inspects us to-morrow. (111 Army.)

Sanitary arrangements chez M.le Curé, hopeless.

October 8th.

Our ship was a small paddle boat. Route marched this morning. Went round all billets in a.m. Very bad—dirty outhouses, overcrowded, and roofs full of holes; but the best procurable. Men take it as a joke. Was able to get three very bad ones improved by being stern with the inhabitants. Interpreter came this evening. An N.C.O.; no pretensions to being a Sahib. Officers and men clamouring for money, and no means of getting it so far.

We've had nothing but bully beef rations so far. Good thing we had F. & M's box. Carbolic soap a failure. Sticky and greasy. We get the "Times" the next day generally. It took me half-an-hour to stamp men's letters with Press Censor stamp. The Company Commanders read and signed the envelopes.

Weather still fine, but foggy and raw to-day. We get a ration of condensed milk daily; 1 tin to 16 men, which is ample. Bread is the urgent need. None, or very little can be got. Germans attacked all along the line yesterday, but were repulsed everywhere except at one place. They all seem pleased with progress of events. Am feeling very fit. Inspection quite a success. Munro said we were a fine and steady body of men. Nugent (Div. Gen.) said 'the steadiest Brigade.' Fergie got great Kudos for capturing a machine gun at H——. Got 6,000 francs for pay, and tobacco and cigs for men, and Fergie brought fresh mutton for us.

October 10th.

Adjutant had heavy cold, but rather better now. "Downs" and we had Church Parade, under Halahan (was Rector of Drumcree, and a delightful man, etc.) We paid men 5 francs each, and issued cigs and tobacco. Great fun about alleged shortness of supplies. The Gen. very excited about it, and the Staff generally disturbed. We have not suffered in any way, but some units did. To-day we got our first fresh meat ration, and bread.

Route marches daily, and one hour's Battalion Drill, and Musketry daily, besides bombing, sniping, shooting and M.G. firing. Dr. Berry operated on a girl by request of the Curé, and the grateful mother sent us a chicken as a thank-offering. Such a heavenly day.

Heavy firing all this p.m., but it is very faint here. Aeroplanes come over every evening, some very high.

October 11th.

The men write 1,000 letters a day! Brigade Field Day to-day. Gas demonstration to-morrow.

October 12th.

This p.m. we had gas demonstration. A school-house was filled with gas, and the whole Battalion put on gas helmets, and walked through it, to prove the efficiency of the helmet. No casualty, but the buttons of the jackets were all discoloured. The "Downs" have moved to another village, which has relieved the congestion here.

October 13th.

A Conference at the Div. Hd. Qrs. about the recruiting problem. The General is sure that Ireland will be left out of any National Service Scheme. General Hickman came over to-day, and said we were only just in time. K.—told Sir C. Hunter after the King's Review we should probably not move after all. We have escaped the Balkans and the Dardanelles by the skin of our teeth, I believe.

They send us a general statement of communiques from each Front, every evening, with Orders. Berry doctors the whole village. 8 miles is their nearest doctor.

October 14th.

There's a Squadron of N.I. Horse about 4 miles from here. We move on Sunday, two days march

into the Trenches, for a week's instruction, then back here for a bit. Caught a spy last night signalling. We have to leave 5 officers behind here, learning bombing; a nuisance. We need every one of them.

October 15th.

Constant calls for Returns and Reports. The people here are very friendly and easy to get on with. Men very energetic; good thing. Had a bath this evening, second since arrival. Water very scarce. Field Day to-morrow: rather a nuisance the day before we move.

October 16th.

Met Elkington to-day. (He now commands our Artillery.) He came to tea. Only arrived from Ypres 4 days ago, where he had been for 4 months, shelled day and night. Has been out 14 months; home twice for 5 days. Never touched and never a day sick. Right through the Retreat from Mons, Marne, Aisne, etc. Looking very well, but tired. Very cheery, and just the same as ever. Says W.O. and G.H.Q., and the French very optimistic. They all think we have the Huns, and at last they are at the end of their men.

October 17th.

Get into Trench area Tuesday, and return here about 28th. Start at 12-30. Short march.

October 18th—[Puchevillers.]

Am writing about 7 a.m., just before starting. In billet. 12 miles to-day and 10 to-morrow.

October 19th—[Couin.]

We came here yesterday, 11 miles, and go into the Trenches this evening, half Company for 24 hours, then the other half. The half Company takes over a half Coy. front for 24 hours, and then each Company takes over a Company front, and then we return to our old billets for three weeks, I believe. Weather glorious, lucky, as we are not in billets here. Men came well yesterday. We are all very fit and well. The men get on very well with the inhabitants. The interpreter says the people like them. We don't actually move from here until 4 p.m. I believe. Batt. H.Q. in a house in the village. German Trenches 700 yards away at this part of the line. This is a Territorial Division here; very good. I believe out since March. I think we come out of Trenches Monday.

October 20th—[Hebuterne.]

Here we are, in the firing line, billeted in a very dilapidated village, about 500 yards from the Huns. We got in a good bit after dark, and it was difficult to find the way about, and settle down into the various tumbledown houses allotted to us. Every Company split up, half in Trenches, and half in Reserve, in a village. Adjutant and I in kitchen on ground floor. No food procurable last night, so I had a F. & M. consommé—delicious. Walked round one Coys. Trench. It took 2 hours. Back at midnight to sleep fitfully. This a.m. went round with Brigadier Nicholson. Was in Hampshires. A three hours' walk at top speed through a maze of Trenches.

(To be Continued.)