



What effect did the

World War 1
Military Training
Camp

established at

Fovant in Wiltshire

have on the village and its people?

LIZ HARDEN

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1 – Introduction

How the Military Training Camps, established in Fovant during World War 1, accelerated social change in the village.

The village of Fovant, following the course of a small stream then crosses the A30 from south to north, midway between Salisbury in Wiltshire and Shaftesbury in Dorset.

The village cannot be seen in the accompanying photograph, taken from the top of Fovant Down, because it is hidden in the belt of trees in the middle ground on the far left. Equally hidden is the A30 behind the thin hedgerow in the mid foreground, as is the railway in the background beyond the village.



The very existence of the railway and the major road through the Fovant is sufficient indication that the village was likely to be aware of the social, political and economic turmoil occurring across Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries.

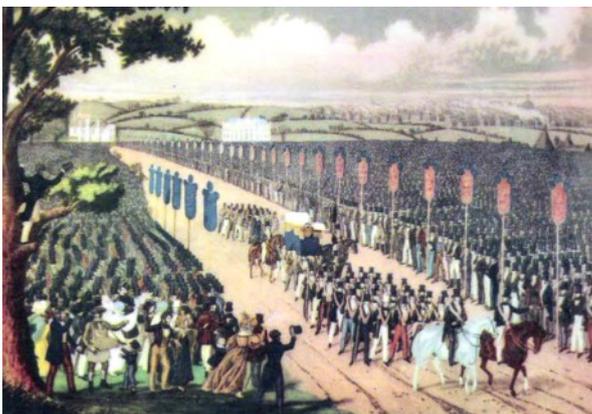
However, although not directly affected, Fovant and its neighbours were not immune to the working class social unrest, which, following in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, simmered throughout the 19th and early 20th century in Britain well before the onset of World War 1.



Peterloo - Manchester August 1819. Fifteen deaths and 650 people injured when a peaceful demonstration of pro-democracy campaigners was charged by sabre wielding cavalry.



Chartists - 1830s. Campaigned for the rights of the working classes.



Demonstration in support of the Tolpuddle Martyrs

Tolpuddle Martyrs - Dorset - 1834. Six farm labourers arrested for daring to form a union to defend their livelihood against exploitative masters. Mass protest against their sentence of seven years deportation to Australia led to the men being pardoned.

Swing Riots 1830s - rural unrest in the southeast and west at the introduction of agricultural machinery.



Rick burning and machinery breaking.



Trial held at Salisbury Magistrates Court. 19 executed - 505 transported - 644 imprisoned.

A serious outbreak of what might be called 'Captain Swing' activity took place at Tisbury only a few miles distant from Fovant. No Fovant men were involved in that action, but dissent was now beginning to stir, not only throughout the country but also within the local community.

Literacy among the working classes was becoming widespread, communications nationwide were improving, Suffragettes and workers were on the march, socialism was spreading and Trade Unions were multiplying, heralding the formation of the Labour Party.



How much any of this national activity affected the people of Fovant, and its neighbours, is open to conjecture.

However there is no doubt whatsoever that, in the early 20th century, a combination of national and local circumstances brought about profound and lasting social change to the village of Fovant.

This catalyst for change was the establishment, in 1915, of a large World War 1 Military Training Camp below Fovant Down.

2 – Military use of Fovant land

South Wiltshire has been a centre of military activity since the War Office purchased large parts of Salisbury Plain in 1897 to become a training area. Indeed Fovant itself was no stranger to military activity for manoeuvres were held on the down from as early as 1898.

According to a small unsigned, but dated, note amongst the Simper family papers ...

1910
Kaiser William reviewed The Army
Manoeuvres on Fovant Downs just
above the Chalk pit; In July 1910
accompanied by Officers & High
Officials of Japan & Various other
Countries; all in their official
Uniforms, Gold Helmets; and
Full Regalia; all on beautiful
Black Horses; A very hot sunny
day. Airship BETA flying over.

'Kaiser William reviewed the Army Manoeuvres on Fovant Downs just above the Chalk pit, In July 1910 accompanied by Officers and High officials of Japan and Various other Countries, all In Their official Uniforms, Gold Helmets and Full Regalia and All on Beautiful Black Horses. A Very Hot Sunny day. Airship Beta Flying' Over.'

This brief description of such an occurrence sounds so improbable as to be the stuff of fiction. However that such events did take place is to some extent confirmed by other contemporary military activity.



The airship Beta, completed in May 1910, flying over Farnborough, Hampshire.

That primitive military aircraft flew, and sometimes landed, near Fovant, as shown in this photograph and text from Peter Daniels book 'Around Wilton in Photographs,' is further confirmation of early military activity in the area.



'AN EARLY FLYING MACHINE AT FOVANT'

This Farman flying machine was one of several to be seen around south Wiltshire during the military manoeuvres which took place in September 1910. Flown regularly by Captain Bertram Dickson this biplane was powered by a 7-cylinder French-built Gnome engine. its top speed was just 50 m.p.h.'

The following extract from Bob Combes memoirs 'The Life and Times of a Wiltshire Farmer' indicates quite clearly that the army continued to be interested in the area around Fovant.

'It was early in 1914 I believe when the village was invaded by hordes of troops on a series of gigantic manoeuvres ... Father harnessed the trap... and we went up to the top of the down (Chiselbury Ring)... where we saw groups of field officers in conference with maps spread out and with orderlies running to and fro with messages'



Chiselbury Ring was a place of refuge in times of trouble for the people of the Iron Age village at Fifield a mile to the west.

Towards the end of 1914, shortly after World War 1 was declared, Bob Combes's father John, of East Farm, was 'notified that part of his farmland had been selected as an ideal site for one of the Army Training Camps that were to be established in the south of England'. His protestations were of no avail and the land was commandeered for this purpose. Construction swiftly started on the Fovant military training camp site, which eventually stretched from Barford St Martin in the east to Swallowcliffe in the west.

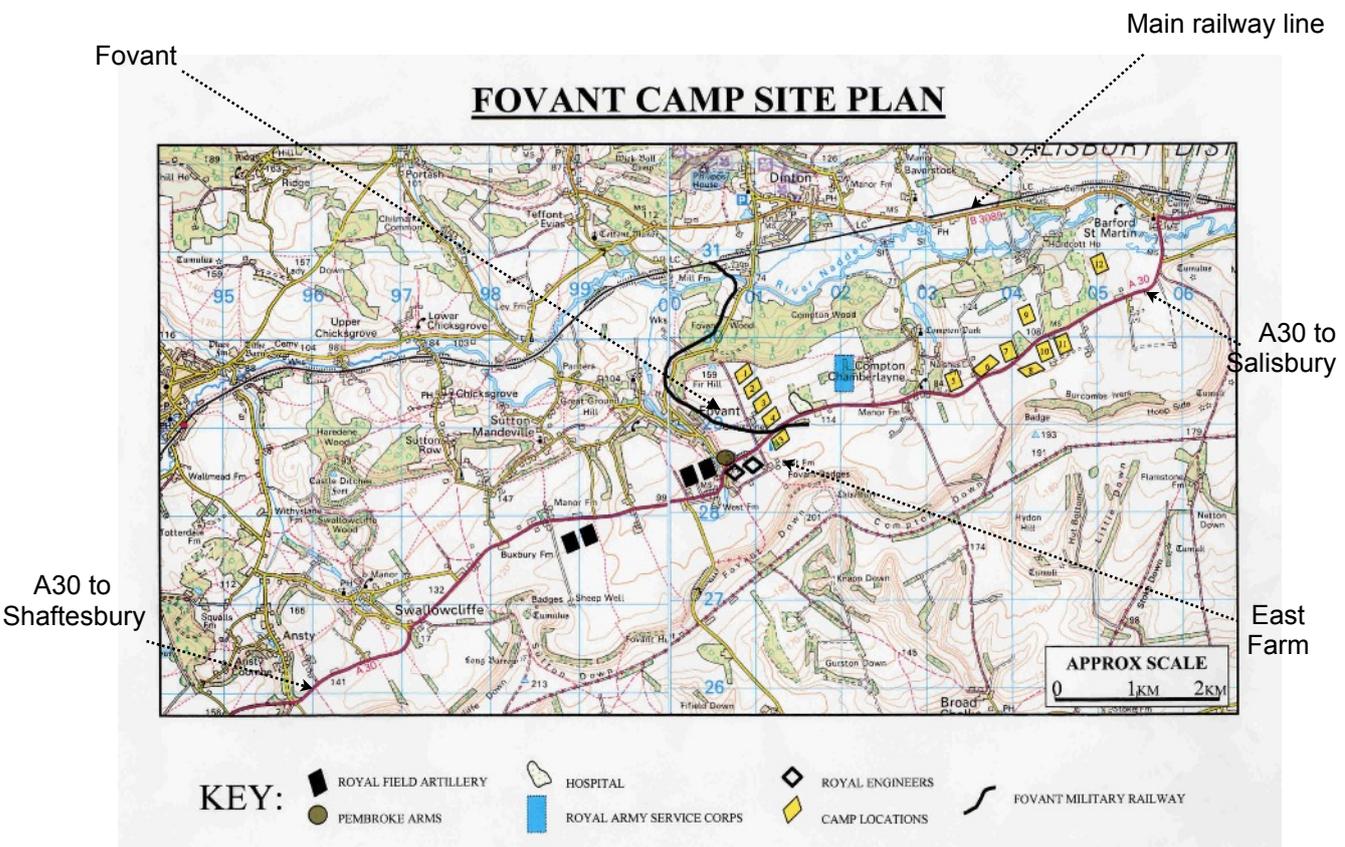


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3 – Disruption and Upheaval



Although other farms in the area were also affected, it was East Farm which bore the brunt of the disturbance. John Combes, who had only taken over the tenancy of the farm in the summer of 1913, not only lost the use of nearly half of his land to the building of the camp, but also had to accommodate himself, his family and his workforce to the inevitable restrictions and disorganisation that the army brought in its wake.

'... the contractors arrived and surveyed the property and in no time at all, steam engines were hauling loads of hardcore to lay down for the camp roads, as well as timber and all the other essential building materials ... It was a very wet winter and the roads turned into a muddy quagmire ... eventually ... hard metalled roads were laid ... across some of our best arable land ... and rows of huts were erected.'

Bob Combes memoirs of his father



Almost certainly the foreman



OHMS = On His Majesty's Service. It's probable that the firm's name is on the board above but it's impossible to decipher, so we have no record of who that contractor was.

Are the workmen part of a contractor's workforce or are they men recruited locally?

STOP PRESS – 3rd November, 2012.

We have just found out that there were two contractors employed in the building of the military camps in Fovant. They were:-

Macdonald, Gibbs and Co. and Henry Wayman and Co.

Local men rickmaking in the early 20th century



Date and venue are unknown.

However as the man in the centre holding the cup, and with a jar, probably of cider, under his arm, is thought to be Hercules Jay of Fovant, it's highly likely that the other men in the picture are also locals, and that they are working on one of the Fovant farms.

With much farm land being commandeered for the army camps there was not the need for so many farm workers.

In which case it is quite possible that some of the men in the top picture, whether redundant as farm workers or not, and undoubtedly lured by the higher wages as camp builders, also feature in the bottom picture.



Builders of Sutton Camp

Photograph by Bealing & Son of Tisbury and Shaftesbury

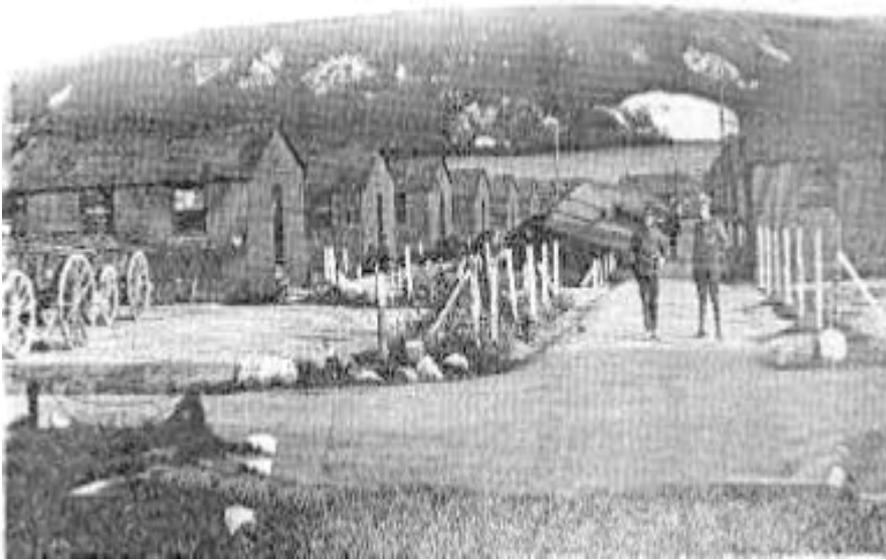
Although the photograph of the camp builders is labelled 'Builders of Sutton Camp' we have an identical copy of it labelled 'Builders of Fovant Camp' so I think we can assume that the title changed according to where the owner of the copy lived. The Fovant copy identifies some of the men in the picture.

Top row - from left - 6th George Andrews, 7th Bill Foyle, 8th Edgar Gurd

2nd down - from left - 8th Herbert Blick, 9th George Moody

Centre - from left - 3rd Herbert Emm, 6th with light waistcoat contractor Ernest Blick, 7th Fred Gurd

Who is the man at the centre of the front row wearing a trilby hat? Note the dog!

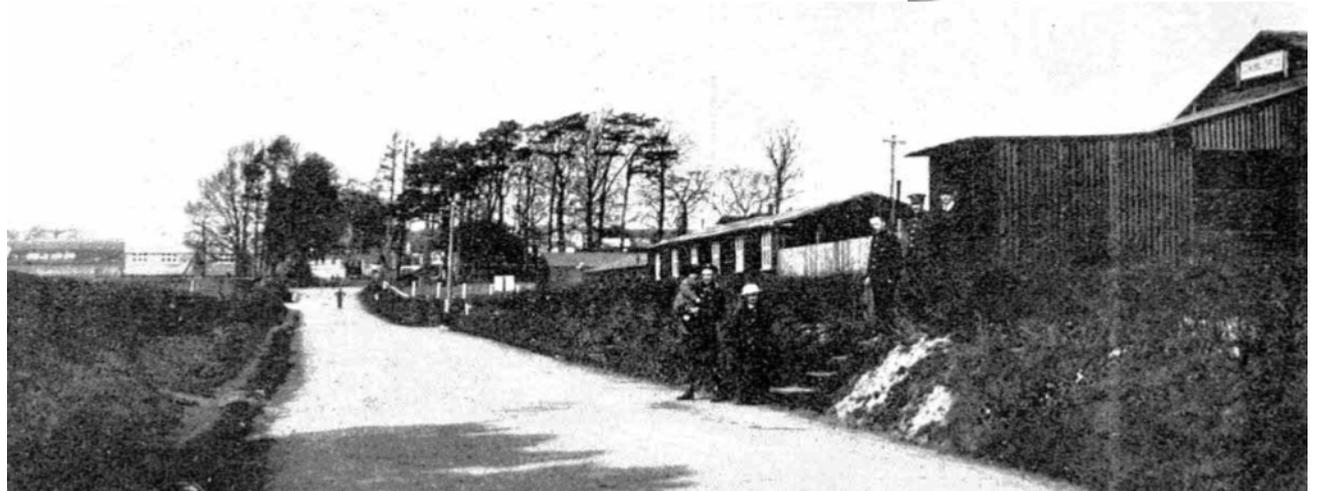


'Soon the camps extended all across the farm buildings on the north side of the road. More land was taken from Sutton (East) Farm and from neighbouring farms ... the process (of building huts) was repeated again and again ... muddle and mud and mess gradually gave way to order and the first troops came to camp in June 1915.'



From A.G. Street's book 'The Gentleman of the Party', Street, a close friend of John Combes, modelled his book on the World War 1 experiences of East Farm.

The camps eventually stretched approximately four miles along the A30 from Hurdcott in the east, through Fovant and on to Swallowcliffe in the west.



4 – The Army moves in

The roads were laid, huts erected, water supplies provided and electricity connections made – all was now ready for the reception of the first contingent of troops.

By land and sea, from all corners of Great Britain, and indeed from the British Empire*, thousands of young men from all walks of life left their civilian jobs in order to join the army for the duration of hostilities. Not all of them came to Fovant of course, but many thousands of raw recruits did undertake their basic training here.

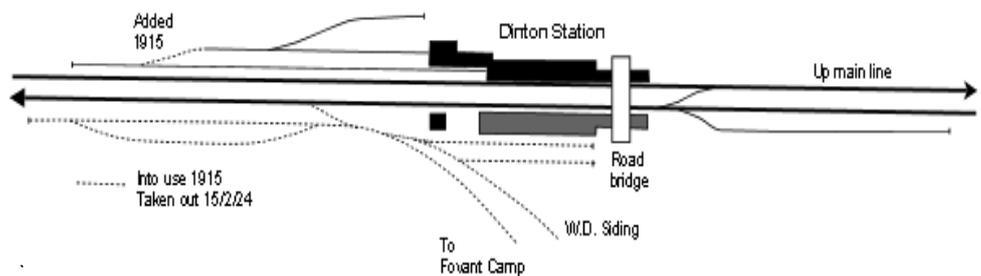
* now known as the Commonwealth



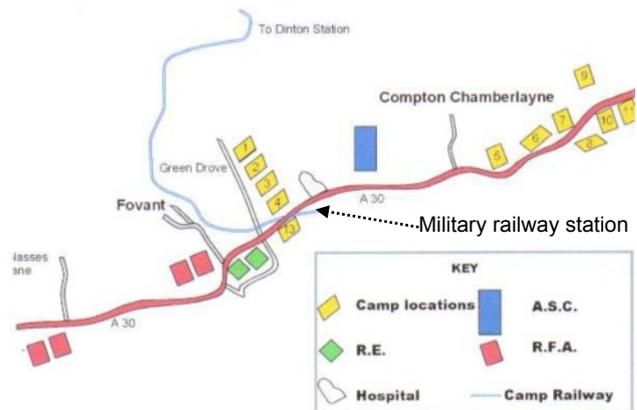
Volunteers queuing to join the army during World War 1.

As there were several training camps in the Salisbury area it is most likely that the recruits used Salisbury station as a 'hub' from which separate groups moved on to one or the other of these training camps. Most would have marched from Salisbury station but a Fovant contingent might well have stayed on the train until two stops further down the line where they could join the Fovant Military Railway which intersected the main line at Dinton Station.

From: Track Layout Diagrams of the Southern Railway. by G.A. Pryer.



Fovant Military Railway locomotive 'Westminster' on her way from Dinton to Fovant. Note the London and South Western train in the left middle ground.



Undoubtedly the army surveyed, designed and ran the railway, but it is quite likely that some of the 'navvying' was done by local men.

One more lucrative source of employment brought to Fovant by the military presence.

London and South Western Railway

The villagers would have been far from pleased to have a railway built across their allotments.

Village allotments

Military Railway

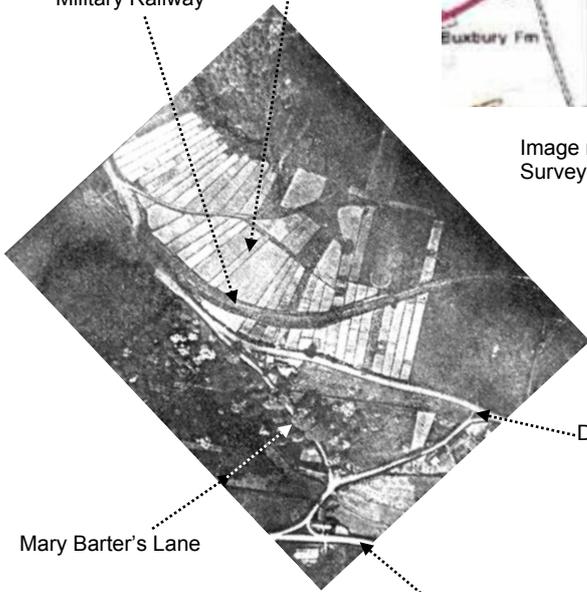
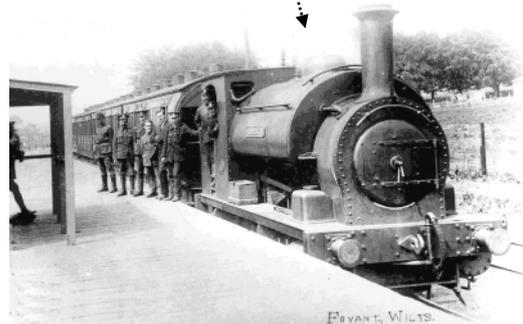


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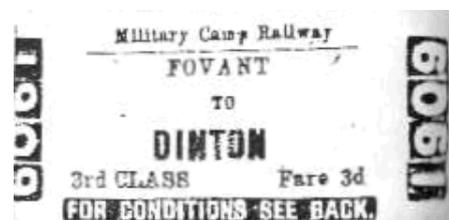


The locomotive 'Westminster' at Fovant Military Camp railway station.

Leaving the railway station at Dinton the train followed a gentle gradient across the fields to the northern outskirts of Fovant. Here, after crossing the Dinton Road, it passed through the village allotments and on to the fields on the eastern ridge of our valley. It then ran near to the A30 for a short distance before crossing this main road on its way to the military railway station at Fovant.

With little exception, the route of the railway crossed arable land, so not only was the land taken out of agricultural production but the disturbance caused by the actual construction of the line must have interfered with what farming practices would still have taken place in the area. The crossing of the A30 must also have been a major cause of inconvenience.

- Undoubtedly the villagers would have been dismayed at the upheaval, disorder and change which followed in the wake of all this activity, but there was an upside to balance the downside of the military presence in the village.
- Almost certainly local men would have been employed in the various military construction sites, thus earning more than they could have done as agricultural labourers.
- The influx of workers meant more custom for local businesses.
- Local civilians were allowed to use the railway.



The decision to lay the spur off the main line to connect with the military camps at Fovant was belatedly made after traction engines, hauling supplies for the construction of the camps, had turned the roads into quagmires.

However, once established, the Fovant Military Railway was in constant use for transporting men and materials to the camps.

Hospital trains stopped at Dinton station to transfer sick and wounded troops on to the Fovant Military Railway for their onward journey to Fovant Military Hospital.



Trains, similar to this one, stopped at Dinton Station to transfer patients to the Fovant Military Railway.

No doubt there was much grumbling from the villagers over the disruption caused by all this construction activity, but permission for civilian use of this railway was an unexpected bonus for the local population. For many years movement into and out of Fovant had largely been limited to the distance a carrier's cart could travel in one day. Now the villagers could just walk up the hill to the Military Railway station, purchase a 3rd class ticket for 3d. (approximately 1p.), ride to the main line station at Dinton, and travel on to anywhere.

It's unlikely that many villagers realised it at the time, but not only could they now more easily explore opportunities further afield if they wished to do so, but also new village-based employment opportunities could come to them.



Carrier's carts in the yard of the Pembroke Arms, Fovant.
(date unknown)

5 – 20,000 meet 400

Fovant camp opened in March 1915 and closed in November 1920. During this period it is estimated that there were as many as 20,000 men in camp there at any one time. According to Kelly's Directories the population of Fovant in 1911 was 403 and in 1920 it was 404. You could say therefore that the population of Fovant between 1915 and 1920 was 20,400. Of course that is too simplistic, but integration between the two groups was inevitable – and desirable.

Most of the practicalities of the trainees' lives were catered for within the boundaries of the camp by other soldiers whose speciality covered whatever was needed to be done. There would have been military cooks, barbers, doctors, nurses and organisers of sports and entertainments to ensure that the recruits were well housed, fed and happy.

However there were some requirements which could only be met through civilian assistance.

For instance ...

- Who supplied enough food and drink for 20,000 hungry mouths?
- Was the food acquired locally or did it come from farther afield by road or rail?
- Many horses, both heavy horses to draw carts and gun carriages, as well as those ridden by all officers and cavalry regiments, were in use at Fovant. Where did the hay for those horses come from?
- Who looked after the men if they were seriously ill?
- Was there anywhere inside, or outside, the camp where the men could get away from the military atmosphere?
- How much free time did the men have, to explore the locality? What public transport was available for them to do so?
- Was there a camp church or did the troops attend church/chapel parade in Fovant?

The answers to all these questions imply the inevitability of joint camp/village co-operation.

6 – Integration

Among the several definitions of the word ‘integration’ given by the Oxford Concise Dictionary are two which have some application to the co-operation that evolved between village and camp during the years in which they lived cheek by jowl.

1. to complete by the addition of parts.
2. Bring, or come into, equal membership of society.

While neither is specifically apt, each definition plays a part in describing the manner in which the coming together of camp and village in practical, financial, social and emotional matters was to become of mutual benefit.

Since each of these areas are inter-related, answering the questions raised on the previous page is perhaps as good a way of trying to discover how, and whether, the ‘addition of parts’ brought about an ‘equal membership of society’. The society in question was of course only temporary, but it left an enduring legacy.

The men had to be fed, and here the practical and financial go hand in hand. Each regiment would have its own administrative staff who were responsible for the well-being of the men in their charge. Therefore catering for the inner man was well within their remit.

Dry goods would have been purchased in bulk, but the camps were set among farms with fresh meat and milk on the hoof and fruit and vegetables on trees, or in the fields. No doubt the farmers of Home Farm, Naishes Farm, East Farm, West Farm and Manor Farm, to mention only those in the immediate locality, were not backward in coming forward to cash in on this possible financial bonanza.

It was a win-win situation for the farmers for the financial rewards of this new market would, when added to the compensation paid to them for the temporary use of some of their land, enhance their bank balances considerably.



‘Eli Noakes was then forced to do something which he would not have believed possible a few years ago, for his master, seeing that all thought of the old farming was absurd, began to grow potatoes’.

From Gentleman of the Party by A.G.Street.

So the camp caterers wouldn’t have to go far for their potatoes. Perhaps the regimental duty ‘peelers’ collected them daily.



Milk from Naishes Farm was delivered to the Military Camp hospital.

Fodder and bedding for the horses was also available right on the camp doorstep.

Run of the mill medical facilities would have existed for minor maladies but there was also a full scale hospital for the wounded and those with serious illnesses.

Being a military hospital the majority of the staff were either from the Royal Army Medical Corps or the Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service.

However local people were employed in the hospital in a variety of positions.



Medical staff at Fovant Military Hospital 1917

Doctor Richard Clay, recently qualified, and the third successive generation of his family to be Fovant's resident doctor, also cared for 120 beds at the military hospital.

In a less responsible position, young girls from the area, many from Fovant, became nursing auxiliaries. Previously most of these girls would have earned a pittance as domestic servants. Now the possibility of employment at the hospital not only created fresh opportunities and new experiences for them, but also widened their social acquaintance – with the obvious romantic* effect in some cases.



Third from the left, Bessie Lever with some of her nursing colleagues.

Photograph courtesy of Mervyn Mullins



?, Kate Lever, ?, Hilda Lever, in service in Fovant. Date unknown but probably just pre-World War 1.

Both Kate and Hilda later joined their sister Bessie to become nursing auxiliaries at the hospital.



* Nurse Bessie Lever marries patient Wilfred Lord.

The men were well fed, their health was monitored, and much of their time was taken up with military training, but they did have some free time in which to relax. Various sports activities took place, and for the more serious minded, poetry readings and debates were organised.

Perhaps the most popular form of camp entertainment however was the camp Cinema.



Obviously it's the same building in each of these photographs. The most likely reason for the change of name is that, although the building itself was army property, different civilian film companies operated at some time during the lifetime of the cinema.



Image reproduced with kind permission of Ordnance Survey and Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.

The Garrison Cinema/Palace Cinema, situated at the bottom of Green Drove, close to the power station that served all of the camps, was open to civilians. For many of the local populace, or the soldiers, it was probable that they had their first experience of moving pictures at this cinema. I was told by one of our older villagers that her mother was an usherette at the cinema.

'... and what interested us children more than anything was the erection of a Moving Picture Palace, the Garrison Cinema, where I was first to taste the delights of the silver screen, with such heroes as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Fatty Arbuckle and the like, to say nothing of Mary Pickford.'

from Bob Combes memoirs of his father

'In Green Drove stood the Garrison Cinema, with twice nightly programmes, admission 3d. and 6d. (1/- reserved) soldiers were allowed to bring their lady friends.'

from a History of Fovant by Roy Nuttall

Even though Fovant had a long-established post office only a short walk down the hill, the army opened its own post office within the bounds of the military camp soon after the outbreak of war.



The Garage House. Date unknown but must be post 1920 since the postbox is already blocked. Note the village pump - the village did not have mains water until the 1950s.

The site of our earliest official village Post Office is uncertain, but it is thought to have been in the current garage house, where the outline of the blocked up post box can still be seen.

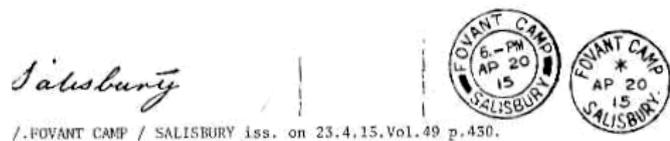
'... there was a post office in Fovant Wiltshire by 1846.' ... it remained in existence until *'the post office (in Fovant) closed in 1917 but re-opened in 1920'*

*Royal Mail Archives

Since the villagers were allowed to use the army post office after the Fovant post office closed, its wartime fate could be said to be a perfect example of the integration of village and camp.



Civilians and soldiers waiting outside the camp 'Postal and Telegraph Office'.



/.FOVANT CAMP / SALISBURY iss. on 23.4.15.Vol.49 p.450.

'FOVANT CAMP/SALISBURY iss. On 23.4.15'

The assumption must be that this is the date that the Camp Post Office opened for business. In which case, for approximately two years, there would have been two operative post offices in Fovant with a short distance of each other.

Charles Austin served during the Great War as a telephonist in Fovant Camp Post Office. Following his demobilisation, at Fovant Camp, he applied for and, in 1919, was appointed the postmaster at Fovant. Having married a local girl, Ellen Shergold, they established the village post office in a small cottage at the north end of the High Street. He remained postmaster there until he retired in 1961.



Ellen and Charles Austin outside their post office in Fovant High Street. Date unknown.

7 – Fraternisation

The men were not confined to camp so in their free time they would have explored the surrounding countryside and the village. Great efforts on the part of both village and camp were made to encourage and accommodate friendly social interaction.

The first port of call as the men walked down the hill to the village itself, would almost certainly have been in one, or the other, or both, of the two pubs facing each other across the A30 at the bottom of the hill.



The Pembroke Arms on the left of the picture, a coaching inn built in the late 18th century, still retained extensive stabling facilities at that time. Many of the officers, who had their own horses with them, could have stabled them there.

The earliest part of the Cross Keys, on the right, is thought to have dated from the 15th century. At least one of the soldiers standing outside must be a hospital patient as he has the distinctive pale blue reverses to his military tunic.

Turn down the side (*left on this picture*) of the Pembroke Arms into the High Street and continue for a couple of hundred yards until, on the right, you will come to Old Fovant House. In the garden of this house during World War 1 the Tipperary Tea Rooms was set up specifically to cater for troops from the camps. Here the men could socialise with the young, and the older, villagers.



The Tipperary Tea Rooms



Continue for a further few hundred yards along High Street until, on your left, down a long path, you come to Fovant Chapel.

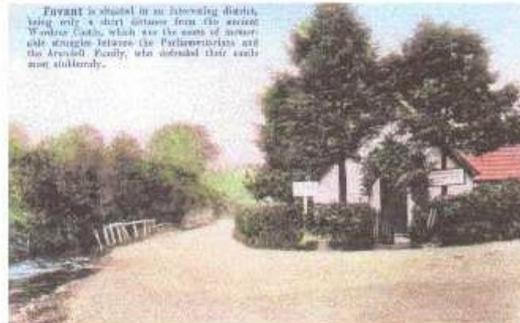
The Chapel records state that 'in 1915 the Rev. C.J.P. Farr was appointed resident pastor because with *'the Military Camp in our neighbourhood – with the thousands of men – renders it necessary in our opinion'*.

Two items listed in the Chapel records are also of interest:-

- 1914/15 Army camp built. Full time minister appointed
- 1918 Wedding. Soldier from Bath marries girl from Gretna Green.

After leaving the Chapel path, turn left and almost immediately the road forks. The right fork becomes Dinton Road while the left fork, by the side of the stream, becomes Tisbury Road. On the point of land where these two roads diverge is the Village Hall.

In 2002, our then Rector, John Eade, put this small article about the Village Hall in our community magazine:



'I have just received a letter from Victoria, Australia with a postcard of Fovant Village Hall recently bought in a shop out there. I have examined the original with a magnifying glass and the notice boards appear to read:



The "POST OFFICE" bit is largely a guess. I suppose this would date the photograph to the first world war? Obviously the War Memorial is not there. But there may be people who can give more information about this?

For interest I have taken a picture from the same spot now (12th June 2002). The Hall is decorated with Flags for the Queen's Jubilee and the Fovant Fete. Notice the same hedge being cut!



*John Eade
Rector*

Unfortunately, his article brought forth no further information but the Rector did glean from the card that here was another 'tea room', and, moreover, one which may have been licensed – and possibly yet one more post office!

Walk about half a mile along Tisbury Road then, after passing the village school, turn right at the cross roads into Church Lane. Pause on the corner to notice the cottage, named 'Fovant Elm', on your right. Here * *'Rose and Arthur Raymond had a General Store and Cafe'* - another place where soldiers could meet and entertain their friends.



'Fovant Elm' Cottage as it was during World War 1. It has been extended considerably.



This was the best of the six photographs taken of the carvings.

Although they are quite difficult to see, carvings on the left hand side of the front porch of Fovant Elm show initials and dates of former visitors or residents.

Starting from the top we have

- LD 1918
 - ⊕ 1918
 - ? ES 1916
 - ? ON
 - HB
 - 1762
- Some time here must have been when Rose and Arthur Raymond were in residence.

A few minutes walk along Church Lane will bring you to our village church, which is dedicated to St. George. Since Sunday Church Parade was more-or-less an obligatory part of service life, the size of the weekly congregation must have been considerably enlarged.

However there would have been those men who would have chosen to visit our church for it is a haven of peace and tranquility for those of all faiths, or none. Many would have appreciated a quiet spot away from the noise and bustle of camp life.



* from 'History of Fovant' by Roy Nuttall

Sadly, visitors to the church couldn't completely forget the war because just inside the gate, parallel with the church wall on the right, are the graves of those soldiers who had died of wounds or serious illness in the Military Hospital.



Temporary crosses marking the graves of soldiers who had died in Fovant Military Hospital.

(The gardener is thought to be Hedley Jarvis, whose job was to look after the graveyard).



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, set up in 1917, replaced the wooden crosses in our churchyard. Their '*principal function was to mark, record, and maintain all (such) war graves and places of commemoration*' worldwide.

Many of the young soldiers whose graves are in our churchyard were Australians. Like most of our own men who were killed during World War 1, they were buried far from home, so it was up to the local people to respect their sacrifice by caring for their graves.

Each funeral cortege would have had to pass the school on its way to the churchyard, so the schoolchildren too did their bit to honour the fallen.

Old Traditions?

'We have had a request from the British Museum concerning a reported tradition that Fovant school children used to place daffodils on the graves of the Australian Servicemen who died in Fovant during the first war and are buried in St. George's Churchyard.

Nobody I have talked to can remember this tradition – but I wonder are there older residents who can remember this happening? It would be interesting to know.

Somebody must have told the British Museum about it in the last couple of years – so there must be somebody who knows. Even if we feel that we could not reinstate the tradition it should be written up and preserved as an important memory of the past.

Please contact me if you know anything of this.'

John Eade Rector

OLD TRADITIONS? ANZAC * DAY

'Primroses! Not daffodils' was the response from Edna Coombes to the pleas for memories of what may have been a now lost tradition.

The item in the January (2005) issue of the Two Towers related to a local custom of placing primroses on Australian servicemen's graves in St. George's Churchyard.

Mrs. Edna Coombes of Fovant recalls this tradition perfectly being among the schoolchildren who made the annual outing to St. George's to mark '*ANZAC DAY' – April 25th.

'Under the eye of the then schoolmistress, Miss Pratt, the children walked from Fovant school to gather primroses which grew abundantly in those days. 'We picked bunches of primroses and put them on the graves of every Australian. We popped them in little pots like fish paste jars. The earliest I remember was 1921 or 1922, and I did it every year until I left school at 14'.

Dee Adcock

* Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

The two small items above appeared, respectively, in the January and February 2005 issues of the Two Towers Community Magazine.

Leaving the church, retrace your steps along Church Lane and, at the crossroads, go straight across into Sutton Road. Just after passing the children's playground, on your right there used to be The Poplar Inn. Built as a Beer House around the turn of the 18th/19th century, it was not licensed to sell spirits.

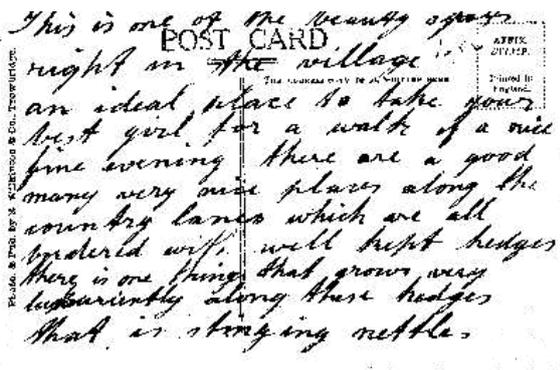
I don't expect that bothered the thirsty soldiers and their friends very much for beer would have been very welcome.



The Poplar Inn closed in 1998 and was then demolished to make way for an executive housing development.

Duly fortified, continue along Sutton Road until, at a small triangle the road forks. Take the left fork in to Dean Lane, which, after about half a mile, meets the A30. After turning left at this junction a short walk will bring you back to the Pembroke Arms and the Cross Keys Hotel. However, just before you reach there, on your right, there used to be a ford across the stream. There is a road bridge there now, but you can still stand and stare at the small waterfall which feeds water from West Farm lake into the stream.

From the messages on the postcards below it would seem that at least two soldiers did stand and stare at the waterfall. Their reactions vary, but each in its way is poignant.



'This is one of the beauty spots right in the village an ideal place to take your best girl for a walk of a nice fine evening there are a good many very nice places along the country lanes which are all bordered with well kept hedges there is one thing that grows very abundantly along these hedges that is a stinging nettle.'

'27.9.1917 This is what they call a waterfall in England - they haven't seen a waterfall over here only what comes from the clouds and that is a good waterfall it is always falling and never stops they want to come over to the place they call West Aust(ralia) they would have something to talk about – what say you Frances?

I only wish I could get home for the new year with you all – will think of you then.

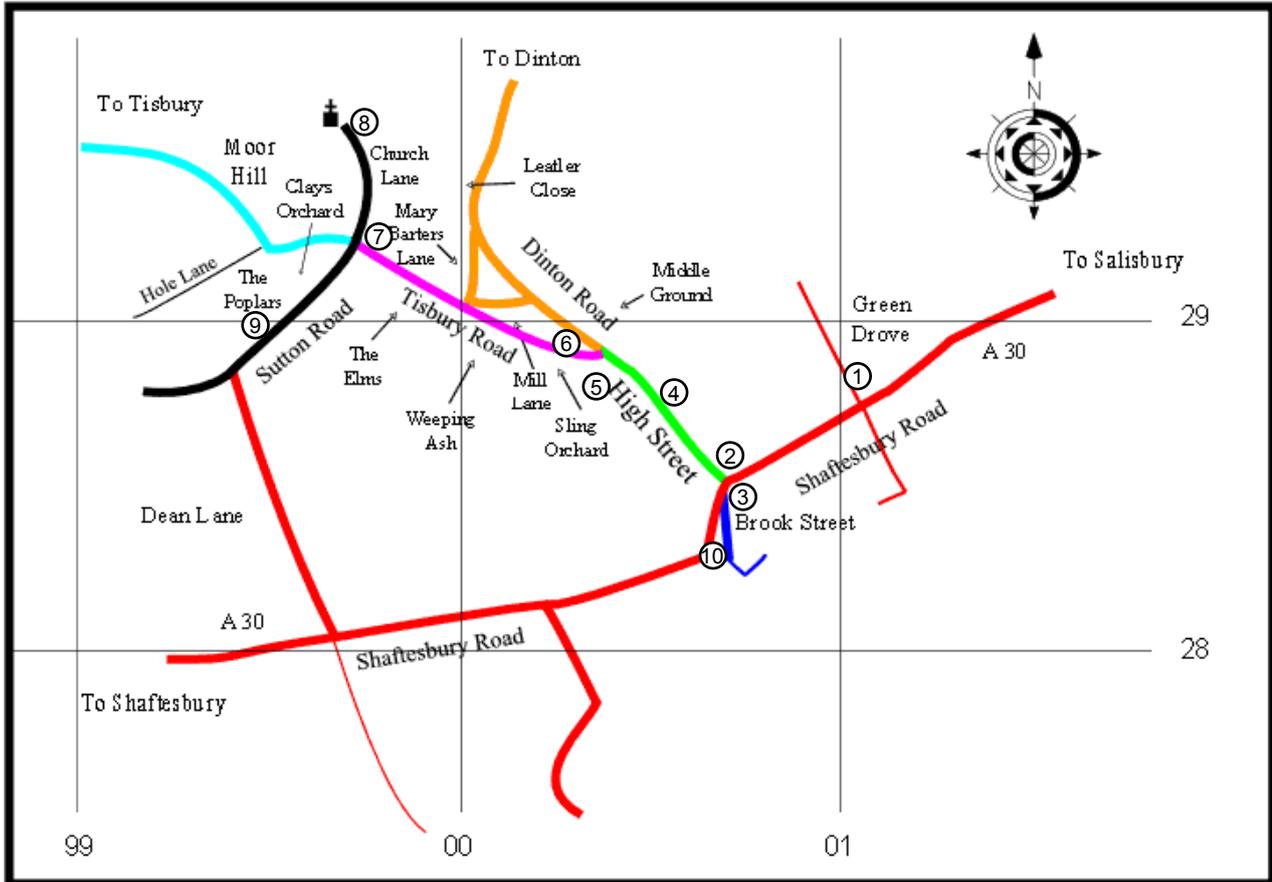
From yours Albert'

He may be poking fun at our waterfall but he's obviously desperately homesick poor chap. I wonder if he ever did get home.



West Farm Lake and waterfall.

Your walk has been largely circular. Follow it on the map starting from the camp cinema at the bottom of Green Drove



- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. The Cinema | 6. Village Hall |
| 2. Pembroke Arms | 7. Elm Cottage |
| 3. Cross Keys | 8. The Church |
| 4. Tipperary Tea Room | 9. Site of the Poplar Inn |
| 5. Chapel | 10. West Farm Lake and Waterfall |

8 – An eye to the main chance

John Combes, denied the revenue that would have come from his land that had been commandeered, soon found ways and means of boosting his income.

'There was a great need by officers who had brought their riding horses and who wanted good stabling, which Father was able to rent to them. On her part, Mother found that there was a demand for accommodation for wives visiting their husbands.'

from Bob Combes memoirs,

Mrs. Combes took in the wives as paying guests, the husbands visited them there ... and East Farm became a social centre for the officers. Undoubtedly the Combes's bank balance would have benefited largely.

John Combes then turned his attention to his, now temporarily redundant, secondary farm buildings. Having heard complaints from the men about the high prices charged at the official army canteens he decided to set up a shop and canteen in one of his barns.

* 'Virtually in the centre of the camp the main barn became the shop itself, with a wooden staircase leading to (the former) hayloft where the troops could have a cup of tea and a snack.'

A piano was available for the troops to have a sing-song and socialise. It was very popular.

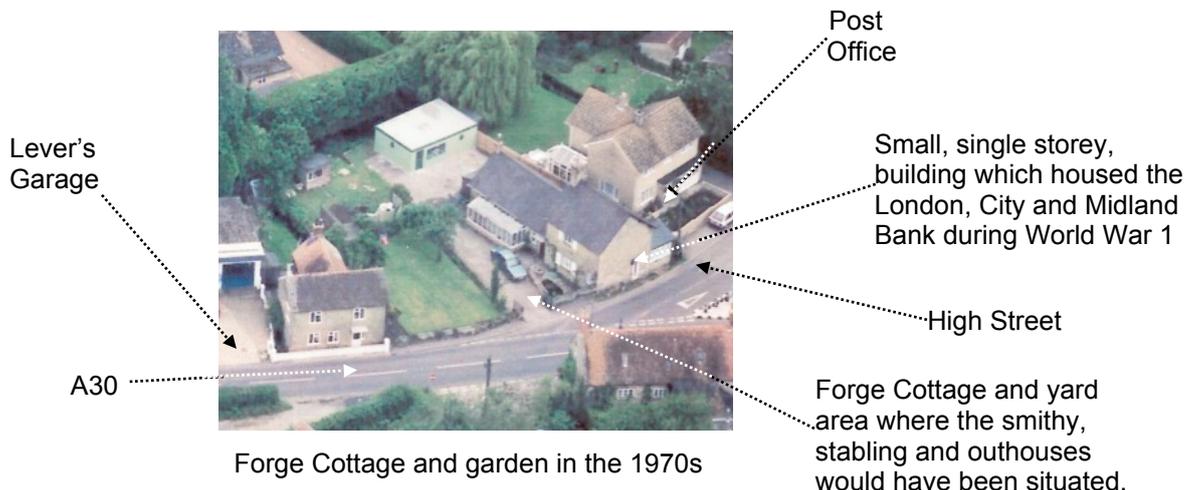
The villagers were just as quick to take advantage of this sudden influx of potential income.

'Other folk saw the business possibilities of the camps, and wherever a site could be procured, wooden shops were erected for the sale of every conceivable want of men of military age.'

from *The Gentleman of the Party* by A.G. Street.

Another walk might be the best way of indicating just what, and where, such facilities sprung into being.

Opposite the Pembroke Arms, across the southern end of the High Street, stands one of our old stone cottages called The Forge. One side of it fronts directly on to the High Street, while the yard/garden area is round the corner facing Shaftesbury Road.



East Farm barn, stabling and hayloft.



Augustus J. Bealing

This self-portrait was taken in 1891.

Monica Borwick, née Grayson, who lived as a child in Brookside, a house sited well back from the High Street opposite the shop, from 1921-1932, wrote in a letter dated 1992, that...

'At the bottom of the garden by the High Street was a green painted wooden hut which...apparently during the 1914-18 war had been used as a photographic studio...there was a small dark room...in it there were still many boxes containing glass slides of groups of soldiers'

I think we can be fairly sure that this was the site of Augustus Bealing's studio.

(This information has only recently come to hand).

The original of the 'flyer' shown below was found in a family cookery book. It undoubtedly owes its preservation to the recipe written on the back. Unfortunately the pencil writing is so faint as to be undecipherable.

Photography!

A. J. BEALING & SON
Photographers,
SHAFTESBURY.

Beg to Announce that they have now
OPENED A STUDIO
IN
FOVANT VILLAGE
For the production of High-class Portraiture
Postcards & Enlargements.

All Orders will receive Personal Attention,
and every effort made to secure the Best
Possible Results.

The CHARGES will be found STRICTLY
MODERATE and consistent with the present
increased cost of material and labour.

The Studio will be open on MONDAYS, TUES-
DAYS, FRIDAYS, and SATURDAYS until further
notice.

INSPECTION CORDIALLY INVITED. TERMS: CASH WITH ORDER.

B. BRICKELL, Printer, SHAFTESBURY.

Acknowledgement and thanks to Heather Holdsworth, granddaughter of A.J.Bealing.



Modern nameplate of the cottage.

According to Kelly's Directories, Henry Jarvis, blacksmith, plied his trade in Fovant from as early as 1855. From the 1901 census, on which he is listed as blacksmith and ironworker, we can deduce that his premises are those in Shaftesbury Road. Later Kelly's entries indicate that when Henry's sons, Charles and Thomas took over, they expanded the business to include a carrier service.

Until they were conscripted Henry's sons would have assisted their father at the forge. Thereafter, for the duration, Henry would have carried on alone. Even so, since they had stabling facilities no doubt the Jarvis family profited from the custom of those officers who had their own horses with them.

Undoubtedly the Jarvis family would have done very well financially during the period in which the camps were in Fovant.

From Shaftesbury Road turn left into the High Street where on this side of Forge Cottage a single-storey extension housed a branch of the London, City and Midland Bank. Although you can hardly see it in the picture below, just beyond the London, City and Midland Bank premises is a wooden shed-like structure in which a branch of Lloyd's Bank was also opened. Two banks next door to each other! There must have been a considerable amount of financial transaction taking place in Fovant during this period.

'The hut (Lloyd's Bank) was removed in the 1920s and re-erected in Tisbury where it still stands today.' (1981). History of Fovant by Roy Nuttall



The notice projecting from the shop door announces that it is the London, City and Midland Bank.

The single storey extension to The Forge cottage which housed the London, City and Midland Bank. They also sold groceries!

The Lloyd's Bank hut can just be seen against the wall of the house beyond.

Directly opposite is the High Street side of the Pembroke Arms and the building with the window in the gable end facing into the picture is the village shop.



The village shop. Date unknown. Pembroke Arms in middle ground.

The long established village shop was kept at that time by Ernest and Eliza Cowdry, who had inherited the shop from their parents Solomon and Rhoda.

Although business would have boomed, I doubt they were very pleased at all the competition that sprung up in the wake of the influx of the army.

Only a few yards further on down the High Street, on the right hand side, was the National Stores.



Underneath the main heading board of the shop the smaller writing says 'also at Wilton, Tisbury and Wylye.' The notice along the fascia under the eaves of the roof, advertises that 'light refreshments of all descriptions' are available.

The staff may be local but 'the National Stores and Co.' are, as their name implies, part of a much larger organisation. As such they could buy supplies in bulk and sell at lower prices, thus undercutting other village outlets.

In this side view of the National Stores two boards are attached to the wall facing towards us.

The smaller one at the top says 'Photography'. The lower board is indecipherable.

Note the soldier standing outside. The pale reveres to his jacket indicate that he is a patient from the hospital.



Norman's shop

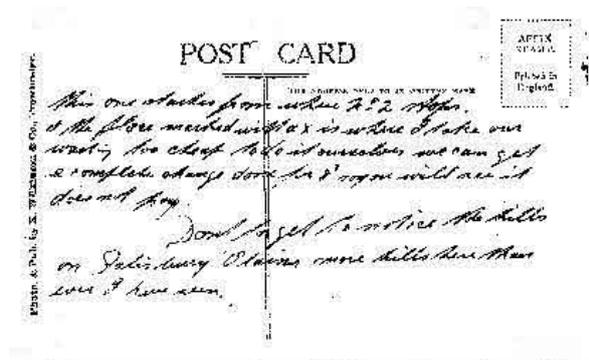
Leaving the National Stores behind, continue to walk north down the High Street for a few hundred yards until you come to Old Fovant House (the Rectory during World War 1).

Across the road immediately opposite was a large wooden hut, which had been a tailor's shop. It was then taken over by a Mr. Norman, who, besides living on the premises, opened it as a grocery store.

Dates unknown, but thought to be there during World War 1.

On a more practical note, one soldier solved the problem of washing his clothes by finding a lady in the village who would do it at a reasonable price. Almost at the end of the High Street, opposite the Chapel, stands a pair of cottages, the right-hand one of which is where the non-conformists in the village worshipped before they built the Chapel.

Thomas and Sarah Todd Wyatt lived in this cottage during World War 1. He was the village baker, she took in washing. I would be surprised if Sarah was the only lady in the village who offered laundry facilities.



'This one starts from where No. 2 stops and the place marked with an X is where I take our washing too cheap to do it ourselves we can get a complete change done for 8d. (approximately 7p.) so you will see it doesn't pay.

Dont forget to notice the hills on Salisbury Plains more hills than I have ever seen.'



The X is on the gable end of the cottage facing us in the middle of the picture.



Thomas and Sarah Todd Wyatt in front of their cottage.

The postcard is not stamped and is No. 2, so it's obviously one of a series which were probably all posted together. The message also suggests that whoever is the recipient of the card will be visiting the writer at some time in the near future.

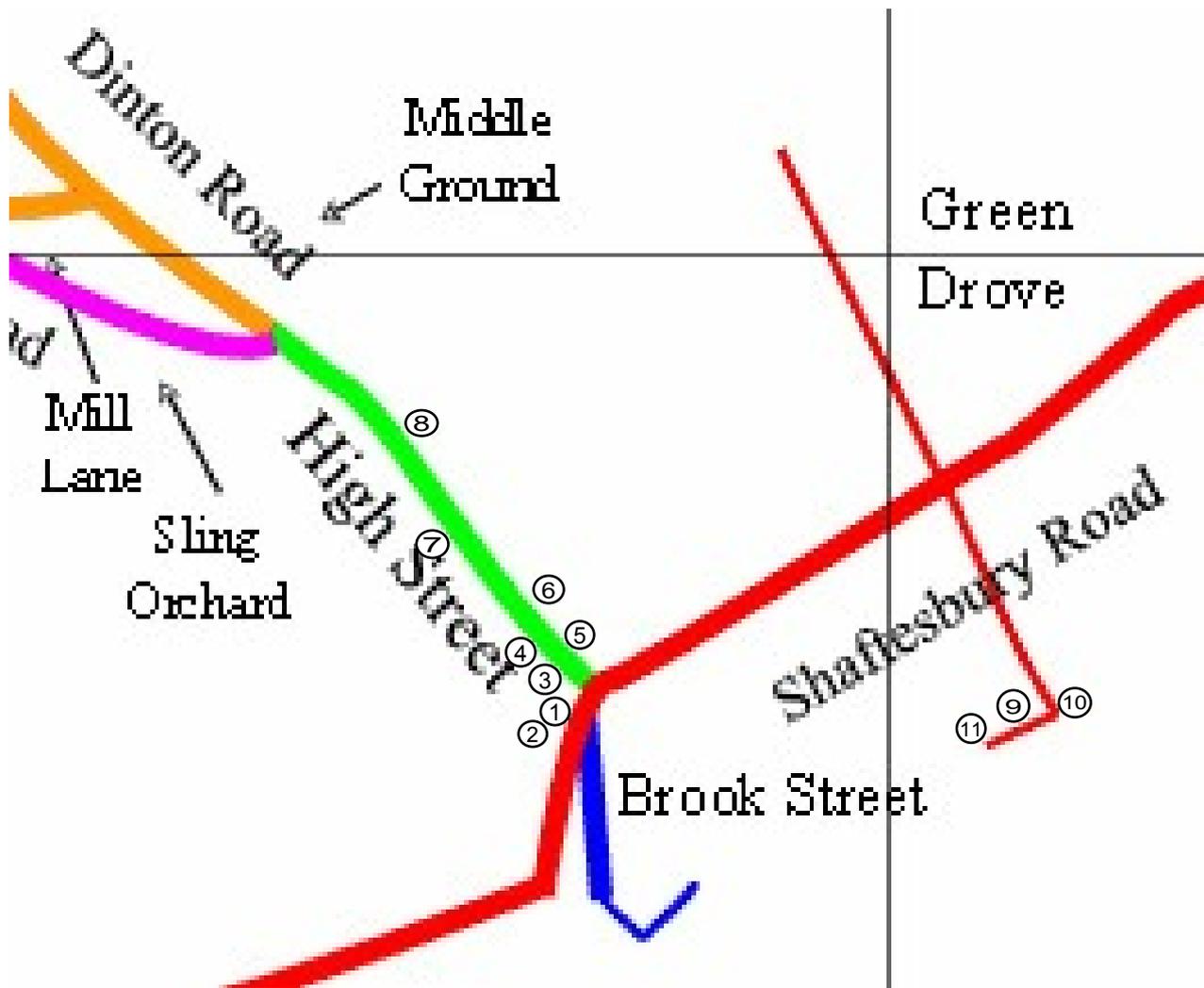
It's unlikely that Mrs. Combes at East Farm was the only one in the village who took in paying guests. Undoubtedly other villagers also benefited financially through letting their spare rooms to the visiting relatives of soldiers.

'Everybody had money – farmers, labourers, boys, girls, and mothers. George Simmons' wife carried on quietly without change ... and save(d) much money. How could she not save, she had no experience of spending.'

From *The Gentleman of the Party* by A.G. Street.

I wonder how many other villagers also saved, rather than spent, their new found riches?

Since most of the buildings during this period clustered in the High Street this walk is linear – an out and return in effect.



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Photographer ? | 6. National Stores |
| 2. Blacksmith, stabling and carrier | 7. Norman's |
| 3. Midland Bank | 8. Laundry |
| 4. Lloyd's Bank | 9. East Farm shop |
| 5. Village shop | 10. East Farm stabling |
| | 11. Accommodation |

Seemingly endless regiments of soldiers who passed through Fovant Camp during World War 1 may well have disrupted the life of the village, but they were also the means of providing a financial bonanza to many of the villagers.

9 – They came, they went, and some came back to be demobilised

Units stationed in the Fovant area during World War 1.

March - July 1915

Oxford and Bucks Pioneers - Royal Engineers - 78th Brigade - 26th Division - A.S.C. Company - Berkshires - Worcestershires - Gloucestershires

August 1915 - January 1916

31st Yorkshire Division - 31st Divisional Artillery - 15th, 16th and 18th Battalions West Yorks - Durham Light Infantry - 31st Training Battalion - Royal Engineers - East Yorks - R.O. Yeomanry

January - May 1916

4th, 6th, 9th City of London Rifles - 5th Battalion London Rifle Brigade - 3rd Battalion Queen Victoria Rifles - 8th Battalion Post Office Rifles - 7th City of London (Shiny Seventh) - 1st, 2nd, 11th, 12th Wessex Divisional Training - ASC.

August 1916

The London Battalions were amalgamated and the Camps occupied by Australians. A number of German prisoners of war were brought to the Royal Engineers camp, and were still there until the end of the war.

January - March 1917

The 59th Division arrived from Ireland where they had been stationed during the 1916 rebellion. Lincolnshires - Leicestershires - Sherwood Foresters - Notts and Derbyshires.

March 1917

Australian - Oxford and Bucks. Training Battalion - Berkshires - Dorsetshires Training Battalion - Warwickshires.

From October the camps were mainly occupied by Australian troops except for West Farm where there was a Labour Battalion. With the ending of the war Fovant became a Demobilisation Camp.



'This card illustrates the frustration felt by many soldiers longing to return to civilian life in 1919. Fovant Camp was not so much a barrier as a gateway. Demobilisation there took less than a day and provided a gratuity and a railway warrant.'

From 'Wiltshire and the Great War'
by T.S. Crawford

The note in the top left corner of the card reads 'The Home Fires Still Burning'. Along the path is written 'The trail that leads to' ... the Last Barrier.

"Demobilisation long in coming saw him eventually returned first to the Isle of Wight, then to Gosport and finally to Fovant".

'From Gosport we went to Fovant on Salisbury Plain, and that's where I got my demob papers. We were sent to the quartermaster's store, given our civilian clothes, all the same and ill-fitting, or rather it would be more accurate to say that they fitted where they touched. We were then handed a travel warrant and set free. There was a light railway from Fovant to Salisbury from where we took a main line to where ever we were going. I headed for Bath and home.'

From 'The last Fighting Tommy' by Richard Van Emden.

Harry Patch 1898 - 2009



The last fighting Tommy.

Demobilisation camps like Fovant may well have been the 'Last Barrier' for British troops but, obviously, such was not the case for those men who had come from overseas.

It was hardly surprising therefore that some of the Australian troops in our area, **'deserted and lived rough in the woods near Fovant'* No doubt they were apprehended and court martialled.

** By April 1920 all who had volunteered ... or had been called up for military service, for the duration of hostilities only, were back in civilian life.'*

* from Wiltshire and the Great War by T.S. Crawford

The Fovant men, who may even have been demobilised at Fovant Camp, came home – or some of them did. Sixty-four men returned safely, but seventeen who died in battle were buried, or remembered elsewhere. All are listed on this memorial plaque displayed inside our church.



One of the many tragedies of World War 1 is that so often the dead have no known grave. This was particularly true of the men of Fovant, nine of whom are commemorated on memorials to the missing.

Of those whose graves we do know about, most are buried in either the large British cemetery at Tyne Cot in Belgium, or the equally large one at Thiepval in France.

During the Middle East campaigns, one of our men was buried in Turkey and another in Iraq and after the Battle of Jutland, the oldest of the Fovant men to serve in World War 1, was buried in Norway.



George Lever

Lost at sea after his ship, the HMS Tipperary, was sunk at the battle of Jutland in 1916, the body of George Lever was washed on to the Norwegian shore. He is buried in the Norwegian Military Cemetery in Frederikstad.

Unable to visit his grave, all his wife and children could do was to go into deepest mourning.

The three eldest girls were all nurses at the hospital. The elder son followed his father into the Royal Marine Light Infantry – * enlisted 6. 3.1918.



Bessie Lever and her children

The ritual of a family funeral is still very important to many people today, and was even more so in the early 20th century. Seventeen grieving Fovant families, like many more throughout the country, who, having no body to bury or pay respects to, were dealt a double blow from which many never recovered.

Sixty-four Fovant men returned safely. Who were they and what did they return to?

* From his official service record.

10 – Peace, and its aftermath

Almost exclusively those men from Fovant who served in World War 1 were young men. With little, or no, exception they would have left school at fourteen years of age, so they would not have had many years in work before joining up. It was the custom at that time for a boy to follow his father's line of work so, what type of work was available in Fovant for the sons to follow in their father's footsteps?

Like in many other small rural villages in the early 20th century, employment in Fovant was largely tied to the land. Harmoniously, or otherwise, owners, tenants and their workforces, farmed land, cut timber, ground corn, tended flocks of sheep and cattle, operated forges, quarried stone and chalk, burnt lime, grew watercress and worked small holdings.

*The 64 who returned safely

Bracher	Walter/George, son of Matthias and Louisa (there was another George Bracher who was killed in action in 1914)
Bailey	Bertram/William
Burton	William
Chapman	Samuel
Clarke	Jack
Carpenter	Reginald
Coombes	Charles
Cuff	Philip
Dover	Basil
Easter	Charles
Ewence	Charles/Edgar/Harold/William/Walter
Foyle	Frank
Futcher	Cyril
Goodfellow	Aaron/George
Hallett	Frank
Hayes	John
Howell	Ernest
Jarvis	Charles/Tom/David/Edmund/John
Kerley	Stephen
Last	Victor
Lever	Jack/Ralph/Alfred Jnr./Sydney
Newman	Percy
Penny	Sydney
Perrett	James
Raymond	Alfred/John
Read	Alfred/James/George/William M.M.
Riggs	Jesse/Tom/Fred
Shergold	Tom
Simper	Edward/John
Smart	Fred/Lawrence
Strong	Bertie/Walter
Tinham	Arthur
Thick	Albert/Charles
Trowbridge	Arthur
Turner	Charles/Harry
Wyatt	Sidney/Alfred/Ernest/Leonard

Additionally according to Kelly's Directory for 1911 Fovant had ...

... 'Three carriers, a beer retailer, lamp oil dealer, cycle repairer, three pubs, a butcher, a mason, a coal merchant. a wheelwright and at least two carpenters and builders and a blacksmith.'

So, whether they were following in their father's footsteps or not, the young men of Fovant had quite a variety of occupations to choose from in 1911.

A few years later, 81 young men, almost a quarter of the village population, went to war. Only 64 returned.

The 'safe returners' were all of an age to have been in work before they went to war, but what was the employment situation in the village like when they returned?

Kelly's Directory for 1920 shows that in Fovant there were ...

... 'four farms, a hairdresser, a beer retailer, blacksmiths, two banks, a cycle repairer, two pubs, the National Stores, a butcher, a mason, a coal merchant and a wheelwright.'

There had obviously been some changes while the men had been away.

After the initial euphoria of their return what employment opportunities would be available to them as they readjusted to civilian life once more?

* From p.221 of the original Clay Papers held in the Salisbury and South Wilts Museum.

... also from p 115 of 'Some Notes on the History of Fovant' by R.C.C.Clay, indexed and edited by M.C.L.Harden, copies of which are held by both Salisbury Museum and Salisbury Local Studies Library.

11 – The Pembroke Sale

Even as the men were trickling back home, this event occurred which, on the face of it, would have little effect on their lives. However, for many in the village, not least some of those 'safe returners' it was to be of long-term significance.

Most of the parish belonged to successive Earls of Pembroke, whose family seat is at Wilton, in the county of Wiltshire. Following the death in 1913 of the 14th Earl, the estate was severely hit by death duties. To raise funds the 15th Earl was forced to sell off property and land he owned in several outlying villages. Fovant was one of these villages.

A public auction was held at 2 p.m. On the 27th August 1919, at the White Hart Hotel in Salisbury, for the sale of property and land in Fovant.

By Direction of the Right Honourable the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

WILTSHIRE,
NEAR SALISBURY.

Particulars, Plan and Conditions of Sale

OF

Further Outlying Portions of the Wilton Estate

COMPRISING

THE FOVANT ESTATE

INCLUDING

VALUABLE DAIRY FARMS

well equipped with Good Houses, Buildings and Cottages.

Accommodation Land, Small Holdings, Cottages,
Allotments and Gardens,
several exceptional Building Sites

ALL FREEHOLD

including practically the whole of the Parish of Fovant, extending to about

2067 Acres.

FOR SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION BY MESSRS.

J. CARTER JONAS & SONS

IN CONJUNCTION WITH

MESSRS. LOFTS & WARNER

At the White Hart Hotel, Salisbury,

ON WEDNESDAY, 27th AUGUST, 1919, at 2 o'clock punctually

In 89 Lots.

Solicitors: Messrs. NIGROLL, MANISTY & Co., 1, Howard Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.
Land Agents: Messrs. LOFTS & WARNER, Land Agents and Surveyors, 130, Mount Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.
Auctioneers: Messrs. J. CARTER JONAS & SONS, Auctioneers, Land Agents & Surveyors, 8, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East, London, S.W.1; and Cambridge.

Title page of the official sale catalogue.

SUMMARY OF LOTS.

LOT No.	DESCRIPTION.	AREA.			LOT No.	DESCRIPTION.	AREA.		
		A.	R.	P.			A.	R.	P.
1	West Farm	584	—	18					
2	East Farm	610	—	37	49	Brought forward	1928	2	—
3	Fir Hill and Plantation	137	—	3					
4	Old Pasture	37	3	18			2	—	29
5	Arable Land	22	2	25	50	House, Buildings, Gardens, and Orchard	1	1	—
6	Small Holding	45	1	9	51	Orchard and Buildings	2	2	33
7	Arable Land and Plantations	65	2	9	52	Building (used as Garage), Yard and Garden	—	—	20
8	Arable Land	5	—	—	53	Pair of Cottages and Gardens	—	—	33
9	Row of 4 Cottages	—	2	7	54	Detached Cottage and Garden	—	—	33
10	Small Holding	66	3	30	55	Cottage Residence, "Hillside," and Garden	—	1	4
11	House, Homestead, Orchards, etc.	9	1	36	56	Orchard	—	3	15
12	Accommodation Grass	14	1	5	57	Cottage and Garden	—	—	37
13	Meadow Land	6	—	35	58	Ditto	—	1	24
14	Ground Rent and Reversion "Moor Hill House"	—	3	—	59	Row of 4 Cottages	—	—	16
15	Cottage and Garden	—	—	22	60	Cottage, Gardens and Orchard	—	2	3
16	Grass Orchard	4	—	12	61	Small Garden	—	—	16
17	"Ivy Cottage" and Garden	—	2	—	62	Ditto	—	—	20
18	Orchard	—	1	8	63	Site of Church Hall	—	—	10
19	Meadow	3	1	36	64	Cottage, Garden and Orchard	—	—	36
20	Manor Farm	208	3	10	65	House and Garden	—	—	26
21	Grass Land	15	3	11	66	Workshop, Paddock and Orchard	—	1	11
22	Ditto	8	1	10	67	Residence, "Brookside," Garden and Orchard	3	1	34
23	Ditto	2	2	19	68	House, Buildings, Orchard and Paddock	3	—	3
24	Ditto	5	3	3	69	House, Shop and Smithy	—	—	35
25	Ditto	5	3	5	70	Dwelling House and Garden	—	—	26
26	Cottage and Garden	—	1	18	71	Garden and Building Site	—	—	18
27	Grass Close	—	3	24	72	Cottage and Garden	—	—	11
28	Cottage and Garden	—	1	14	73	House, Buildings, Orchard and Grass Land	—	3	27
29	Dwelling House, "The Elms," Buildings and Orchard	1	3	14	74	Cottage and Garden	—	—	35
30	Three Water Meadows	4	1	32	75	Watercress Bed	—	—	16
31	Watercress Beds, Old Mill House and Premises	3	2	22	76	Cottage and Garden	—	1	12
32	Watercress Beds, Cottage, Buildings and Orchard	3	—	21	77	Orchard and Paddock	2	2	5
33	Orchard, Garden and Buildings	1	1	1	78	Pair of Cottages and Gardens	—	2	24
34	Grass Close and Small Orchard	—	2	38	79	Orchard and Paddock	2	3	23
35	Small Building Site	—	1	—	80	Ground Rent and Reversion to Residence "Fishponds"	1	1	17
36	Allotment Gardens	10	2	35	81	The Pembroke Arms Inn, Buildings and Land	15	2	32
37	Grass Land	4	1	10	82	Cottage and Garden	—	—	31
38	Meadow and Plantation	2	1	17	83	The Old Quarry	2	1	23
39	Meadow	3	—	32	84	Catharine Ford, Dairy Holding	27	3	2
40	House, Garden and Orchard	1	—	3	85	Meadow Land and Building Sites	6	3	22
41	Accommodation Arable Land	10	—	—	86	Accommodation Meadow Land	5	—	20
42	A Hillside Meadow and Building Site	1	2	1	87	Grass Land	10	2	13
43	Ditto	1	1	29	88	Part Fovant Wood	41	2	15
44	Detached Cottage and Garden	—	1	4	89	Accommodation Meadow in Dinton Parish	2	1	15
45	Meadow and Plantation	3	3	37					
46	Two Meadows and Spinney	6	2	6					
47	Meadow	3	—	2					
48	Cottage, garden and Orchard	1	2	32					
	Carried forward	1928	2	—		Total ..	2067	—	25

From the official sale catalogue

Some of the Fovant purchasers listed here would have had sufficient funds pre-war to buy property at the Pembroke Sale, but undoubtedly many on the list would have benefited financially during the years that the soldiers from the military camps were spending their money in the village. *'Everybody had money'* said the character in A.G. Street's book *'The Gentleman of the Party'*, and some of them could well have spent it in buying property at the sale.

Village politics inevitably reared its head, as can be deduced from this extract of a taped interview with Peter Wyatt. *'When Grandfather (Thomas Wyatt) wanted to buy his house (The Cottage in the High Street), a certain farmer outbid him for the pleasure of turning him out, so he got someone else to bid for Clifton Cottage for him'*.

Actually Clifton Cottage was a better buy in that a considerable amount of land went with it.

Eleven lots were purchased by the War Office. Three were bought by Wiltshire County Council. Five were withdrawn. The 83 Fovant buyers, are listed:

1. West Farm	Hitchings
2. East Farm	J.Combes
3. Land	J.Combes
4. Land	Hitchings
5. Land	Bracher
9. 4 cottages	Hitchings
11. House and land	M.Bracher
14. Moor Hill House	Shorland
19. Land	Bracher
29. The Elms	Raymond
30. Water meadows	Hitchings
31. Watercress beds	Hitchings
32. Watercress beds	Hitchings
33. Land - building site	Hitchings
34. Building site	A.Lever
35. Building site	Perrett
39. Land	Perrett
40. House - the Gables	T.Simper
47. House	Cowdry
49. Sling Barn	T.L.Bracher
50. House	T.Simper
51. Building site	T.Simper
52. Land	J.Combes
53. Land	J.Combes
54. Land	M.Bracher
55. Land	M.Bracher
56. Land	M.Bracher
64. Cottage	T.Wyatt
66. Workshop	A.Lever
68. House	T.L.Bracher
69. House,shop,smithy	Jarvis
70. House	Mrs.C.P.Goodfellow
71. Garden	Mrs.C.P.Goodfellow
73. House	Turner
76. Land	J.Combes
80. House - Fishponds	A.J.Cuff
81. Pembroke Arms	Matthews (brewers)
83. The Old Quarry	T.Simper

The rest of the lots remained unsold.

Several of the names which appear on the list of Fovant purchasers also appear on the list of Fovant men returning home after demobilisation.

The names which appear on both lists are ... Bracher, Combes, Cuff, Goodfellow, Jarvis, Lever, Raymond, Perrett, Read, Turner, Simper and Wyatt ... but the buyers and the 'returners' are obviously of different generations.

Questions arise

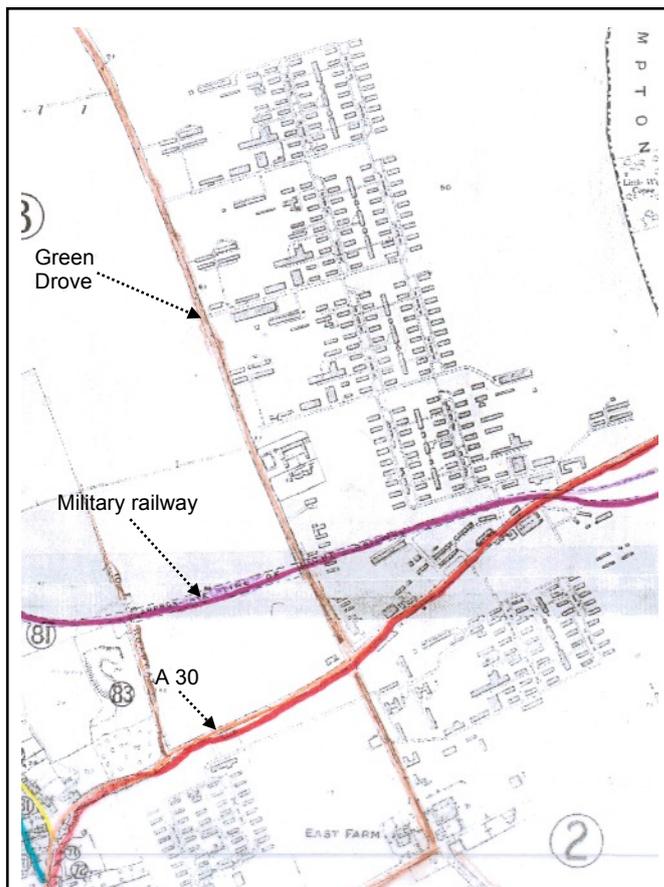
1. Thirty of the young men, almost half of those coming back home, would have had a relation looking out for them, but what about the other thirty four?
2. What had happened to the village and to its people while they had been away?
3. Who had filled their places in their absence?
4. Had their families prospered during the war years?
5. If they had been agricultural labourers pre-war was that all that was open to them on their return?
6. Would they have wanted to go back to their previous type of employment, or would they, after their wartime experiences, want to branch out into something different? There could be sixty-four different answers to those questions ... so what happened next?

12 – The demise of the Fovant Military Camps

Following the 1919 Pembroke Sale of land and property in Fovant, the running down of the military camps there proceeded apace, as demobilisation returned more and more men back into civilian life.

"The dispersal unit at Fovant was disbanded on January 15th 1920". (Terry Crawford in Wiltshire and the Great War.)

Its purpose fulfilled, Fovant Military Camp was closed by November 1920. Accordingly, with only administrative staff still in residence, the camp became something of a ghost town.



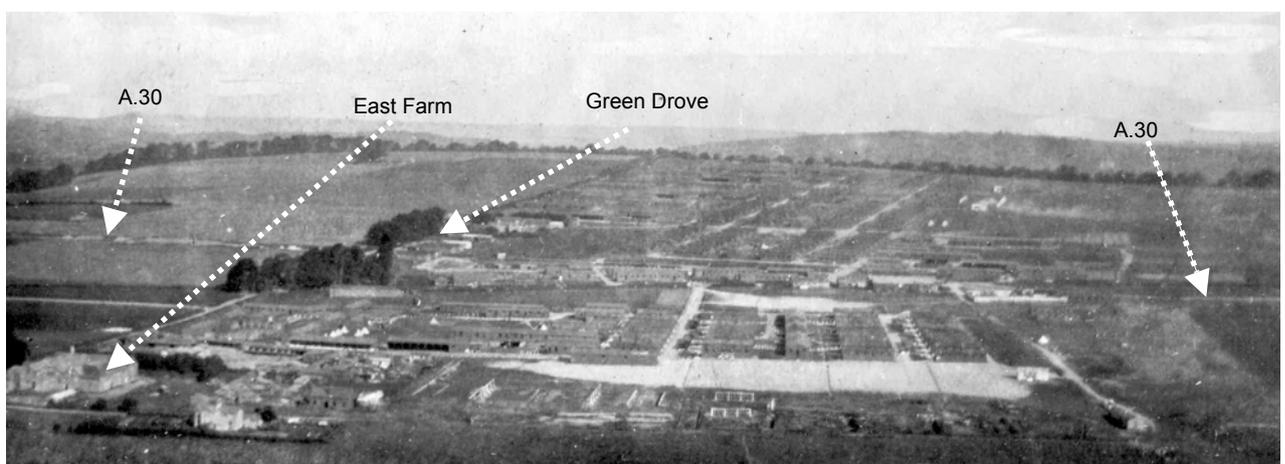
On the top right-hand corner of the map you can just see where the Compton Chamberlayne parish boundary meets that of Fovant, while at the bottom left-hand corner the map doesn't quite meet with the boundary of Swallowcliffe.

Each of these neighbouring parishes was host to some of what is generally known as Fovant Military Camp, so the number of huts shown in this map represents only part of the whole camp.

After the 'dispersal unit' of the whole camp was disbanded at the beginning of 1920, it took almost a year before the camp as such was finally closed. However, the infrastructure, huts, furniture and fittings remained.

What happened to these items once all the administrative staff had also gone?

The photograph, taken from the top of the Down in 1916 (?) shows the same area that is covered by the map.



As demobilisation came to an end and the camp was run down *'the army found itself with surplus huts and equally unneeded materials and stores, the disposal of which ensured business for auctioneers and dealers'*. (Terry Crawford in Wiltshire and the Great War.)

Notices of sales were advertised in all the local papers, and Woolley and Wallis, a Salisbury firm, were in the forefront of the many dealers and auctioneers who held sales in the area. Vast amounts of what might be classed as redundant internal stores – tables, desks, chairs, beds, blankets, pillows, kitchen equipment – were quickly sold.

Once the huts were emptied it was time to bring in the demolition gangs.



The letters R.A.S.C. on what looks like the wagon of a traction engine, would suggest that the vehicle was the property of the Royal Army Service Corps. Be that as it may, the demolition gang is definitely civilian. No doubt the contractors hired some local men as casual labourers. Perhaps some of those recently demobilised Fovant men were employed.

The surplus huts were carefully demolished so that they could be re-erected as useful buildings by their purchasers. Prices varied but on average they were sold for a sum in the region of £100. Most were bought by outside dealers but several were sold off to local farmers or to small businesses in the area.



Ex-army hut used for farm storage at Sutton Mandeville



Ex army hut workshop of Frank Read, village builder. It was later actually attached to the bungalow he built for himself and his invalid wife in 1923.

Several of the huts were bought to be re-erected as dwelling houses.

'It was estimated that a hut priced at £100 could be converted into a home at a cost variously put at £190 or £300 including dismantling, transport, re-erection, and partitioning into sitting rooms, and bedrooms, larder, scullery, bathroom, coal house and "other conveniences"'. (from Wiltshire and the Great War by Terry Crawford.)



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Raymond. (Roy Simper's grandparents) outside their hut house.



Situated in Back Street – now called Brook Street.



Below the Royal Warwickshire badge at Sutton Mandeville. Badge no longer visible.

Whether the residents of these huts were owner occupiers, or tenants renting the property, is unknown to us. What is not in doubt however is that someone in the locality had enough funds to buy the huts, and then equip them sufficiently for people to live in them. *'Everybody had money'*

All huts are now derelict or demolished.



'The Beeches' at Sutton Mandeville

The British Legion, an organisation which concerned itself with the problems faced by demobilised servicemen, was formed in July 1921. A branch of the Legion opened in Fovant on 14th February 1922. Shortly afterwards the group purchased an ex-army hut, and had it re-erected in the centre of the village, where, acting as an 'extra village hall', it was often hired out for various village social and group activities.



The ex-army 'British Legion' Hut was situated close to the road in what is now the front garden of 'Nutwood' in Tisbury Road.



The year was 1922.

FOVANT

The Opening of

The BRITISH LEGION HUT

Mrs Combes of East Farm supported by other Ladies and Gentlemen

has kindly consented to open the hut on

Saturday evening Dec 16th

A Musical programme has been arranged

by Mr.H.Blake and friends

Consisting of

Selections by the Band & Choir

Action Songs & Recitations by the School Children

Songs – Humorous Items & a Sketch

Doors Open 6.30 p.m. Programmes 2/- 1/- 6d.

THE Concert will be followed by a DANCE at 9.30

TICKETS 6d. each to be obtained after the Concert

Proceeds to be devoted to furnishing the HUT



In 1964 the site of the British Legion Hut was sold to a property developer. The hut was bought by a local farmer who, after re-erecting it in the field pictured above, used it for storage.

With what might be called the domestic internal redundant stores sold, and the huts largely disposed of, a bewildering variety of building materials – windows, doors, sheets of corrugated iron, timber, bricks, fittings and fixtures – was still available for sale.

Local papers continued to advertise sales of such items, not only during the years while the Camps were being demolished, but for several years after the majority of the material had been dealt with.

Extracts from the Salisbury Journal:

- 20.1.23 a sale of dismantled hut timber, corrugated iron, and a selected assortment of floorboards, doors, windows, and various timbers, on Tuesday next, January 30th at 2.p.m. In Salisbury Market Place. Charles Mountford, estate agents.
- 2.2.23 glazed sinks, galvanised water piping, floor sections, iron sections, complete sectional huts, a quantity of spades, shovels, picks, buckets, etc., etc.,

Woolley and Wallis, the Castle Auction Mart, Salisbury.

That both the sales mentioned in the advertisement above took place in Salisbury, indicates that at least some of the goods for sale had been moved from the Camp site in Fovant. Some of these items may have been transported from Fovant to Salisbury via the Fovant Military Railway. However this is an educated guess rather than a known fact.

- 15 Oct 15 railway initially opened.
18 Dec 20 railway closed – probably after all the men had been demobilised.
5 Mar 21 railway re-opened – to transport goods for sale to Salisbury?
15 Feb 24 railway finally closed – Fovant site now cleared?
1926 track lifted – precise date unknown.

Although the larger sales took place in the town, it is likely that similar smaller sales also took place at the Camp site itself. The local village handymen, carpenters, and builders would undoubtedly take advantage of the opportunity to buy building materials at what were probably give-away prices.

Additionally ordinary householders from surrounding villages would have flocked to such a sale in search of a bargain.

'Everybody had money'

13 – Moving on – a New Normality

The army had gone, the camps were demolished, the sales, large and small, were events of the past and the village started to re-adjust to peacetime activity.

The huts purchased for village purposes were re-erected and put to a variety of uses, and it wasn't long before evidence of some of the smaller items purchased at the camp sale began to make an appearance.



Corrugated iron replaced a thatched roof.



Bridge of railway sleepers over the village stream.



Ex-army hut window frame in storage shed.



Ex-army hut window frame in house extension.



Standing outside the building is Rob Boatwright, who spent all his adult working life at Lever's Garage. Date unknown, but probably the late 1950s.

Constructed of sheets of corrugated iron with a couple of ex-army hut windows inserted, Lever's Garage was established in 1926 by Sidney Gould Lever (one of Fovant's 'safe-returners') and J. Witt, a local wheelwright.

The partnership changed several times over the years, but the garage, rebuilt in the early 1960s, remains open for custom to this day – and is still known as Lever's Garage.

Sidney Gould Lever came from a long line of village carpenters, so in setting up Lever's garage after returning safely from military service during World War 1 he was branching away from family tradition. Perhaps his wartime experiences interested him in motorised transport.

However, his second cousin Alfred, on his safe return from World War 1, no doubt re-joined his father and grandfather, both of whom were also named Alfred, in their well established carpenter's business.



Alfred Lever's carpentry workshop – and licensed slaughterhouse.



Frank Read's builder's workshop.

We don't know when the carpentry workshop was built, but there is a clue in the window, which can be clearly seen, even though the building is in the process of being demolished. The window of the Lever workshop matches that of the Read workshop. We know that Frank Read's workshop was in operation in the early 1920s, therefore it is likely that so was Alfred Lever's. In which case it is probably safe to assume that, as a long established Fovant village carpenter, Alfred Lever would have used materials bought at the Camp sale in the construction of his workshop.



On his 'safe-return', Sidney Wyatt (senior), nephew of Thomas Wyatt of the Clifton Cottage purchase, took over the tenancy of the former National Stores building in the High Street, where he started a newsagent's shop. None of the extended Wyatt family were shopkeepers so it is of interest to note that here is another returned soldier branching out into a new line of business to that of his family.

The date of the building of the adjacent hut, where Sidney Wyatt lived with his wife and three children for many years, is unknown to us. However the fact that it is made of sheets of corrugated iron suggest that here, once again, use has been made of material bought at the Camp sales.

In becoming village builders, Frank Read, son of George Read, landlord of the Cross Keys, and Tom Bracher, son of Thomas Bracher of Ings Farm, were two more Fovant men who did not follow in their father's footsteps – although Tom Bracher did take over Ings Farm after his father's death. Taking advantage of the conjunction of the sale of Pembroke land in the village with the military sale of building materials, working on a more ambitious scale than previous village carpenters and handymen, each young man independently launched into house building.



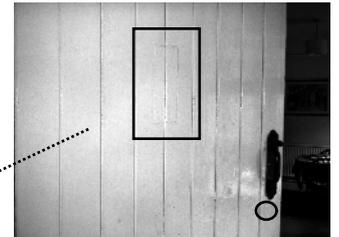
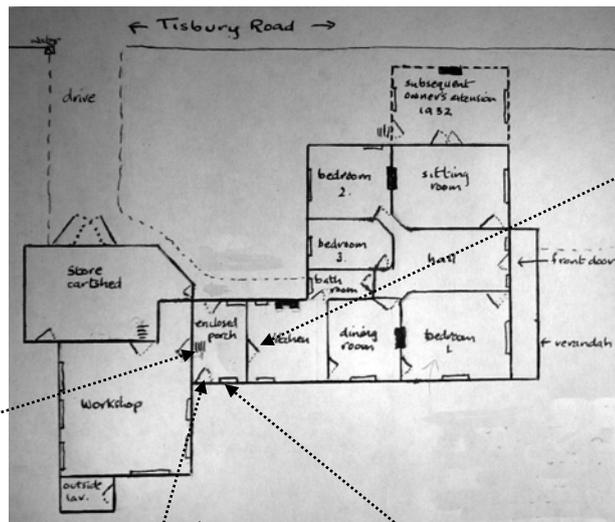
The Croft in 2012

As early as 1923, Frank Read built The Croft, the first bungalow to be built in the village. Set in three acres of land stretching from the skyline down to a long frontage bordering Tisbury Road, it was a rambling building set at right angles close to the road.

Internal changes, made by subsequent owners, largely masked the use of material from the Camp sale throughout the domestic part of the building, but evidence does still exist in the 'scullery' extension Frank Read built to join the house to his ex-army hut workshop.



Door from scullery (porch) into the workshop. In the cream painted letterbox shape the impression of the words 'OFFICERS MESS KITCHEN' can be seen.



Door between the scullery (porch) and kitchen. This must have been an outside door originally, as it has a blocked-up letterbox and keyhole. Note the thumb latch on all these ex-army doors.



Scullery (porch) window



Inside of back side door. Laterally braced - like all ex-army hut doors.

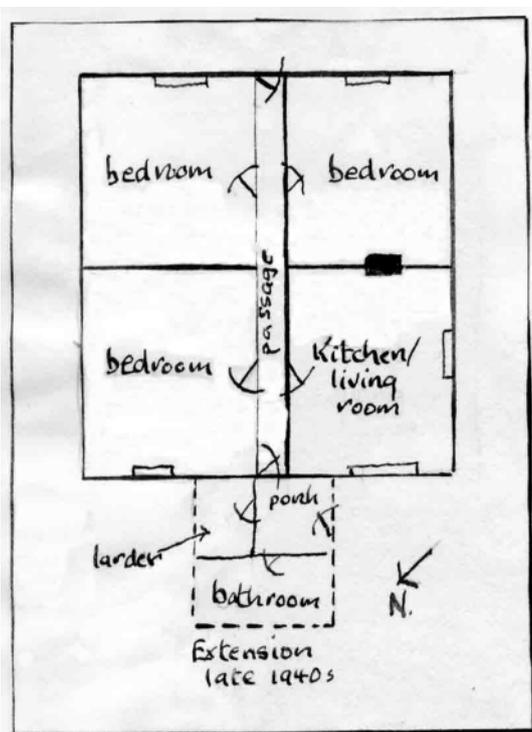
During 1924 Frank Read went on to build a house and another bungalow in Tisbury Road. In the early 1930s he built three more bungalows in Dinton Road. We don't know whether he used any building materials from the Camp sales for these buildings, but he may well have had an, as yet, unused store of these fixtures and fittings in his workshop.

As a 'safe-returner' Tom Bracher may well have spent his first few years back home assisting his father in the running of Ings Farm. However, in 1924 when John Combes of East Farm, commissioned him to build five cottages in which to house his farm workers, he diversified into house building. The first two were built in 1924 and the remaining three in 1927.

No useful comparison between the complicated plan of the bungalow, combined with a workshop, that Frank Read built, and the cost-effective, simplicity of Tom Bracher's plans for these cottages can be made, for each was made for a different purpose. Frank Read was building a home for himself and his wife on his own land, whilst Tom Bracher, employed by John Combes, was constructing houses on Combes's land, for occupation by John Combes's employees. In effect these buildings would be 'tied' cottages which would pass from worker to worker as their employment by John Combes waxed, or waned.



Four of the five East Farm cottages. The fifth, out of shot in the left-hand picture, deteriorated and was replaced by a modern bungalow. The cottage nearest to the camera in the same picture has been extended and modernised. The three other cottages shown in the right-hand picture, apart from the addition of porches, are as they were originally built. All the bungalows are now owner occupied.



Fronting the A30 road, each cottage provided maximum accommodation for the minimum outlay of space and money.

A passage from the front door virtually divided each cottage in half. Three bedrooms catered for a large family. All day-to-day living would take place in the kitchen.

Since there was no bathroom until the late 1940s, such bathing as took place would have to be done in the kitchen.

No provision was made for a lavatory, which was probably a bucket in a garden shed. 'Night soil' was collected weekly and spread on nearby fields.

Behind each cottage, accessed from a track at a right angle off Green Drove, was a large garden.

According to the late Tom Coombs, (no relation to John Combes) who spent his childhood in one of the first pair of cottages to be built, *'Everything came from the camps except the roof tiles and the cement'*.

STOP PRESS

Recently, and long after page 48 had been written, the new owner of No. 2 East Farm Cottages started work on making internal alterations to his house. This involved knocking a wall down, and while doing so he came across a piece of wooden planking with some writing on it. The writing, all in the same hand, was in pencil, but it was decipherable. What it said was:

'The Houses were erected

By T. Bracher

C. Jarvis

C. Foyle

G. Bracher

C. Foyle Jun

E. Jarvis'



The camera flash has obscured the last couple of names, but they are easily readable on the actual plank.

We already knew that Tom Bracher had been commissioned by John Combes of East Farm to build the cottages, but we knew nothing of who assisted him. Tom Bracher was undoubtedly in charge, so it is likely that he wrote the names down in the sense of 'we were here' – almost signing their work. I suppose you could call this writing graffiti, but its importance lies in the fact that it tells us not only why the men were there but also who they were.

This is a primary source which for a local historian is gold dust.

Fortunately we hadn't quite finished proof reading our work, so we were able to insert this STOP PRESS page before the complete text went to the printers.

On his return from military service in World War 1, Ernest Wyatt, did not follow his father Thomas into becoming a master baker. Like his cousin Sidney, he broke with family tradition when he became the dairyman at Manor Farm. From there, obviously imbued with an entrepreneurial spirit, he moved on to independence through the purchase of a small herd of dairy cows which, after many years of hard work, and with the assistance of his three sons as they grew up, resulted in the ownership of Dean Lane Farm – and a very lucrative milk round.



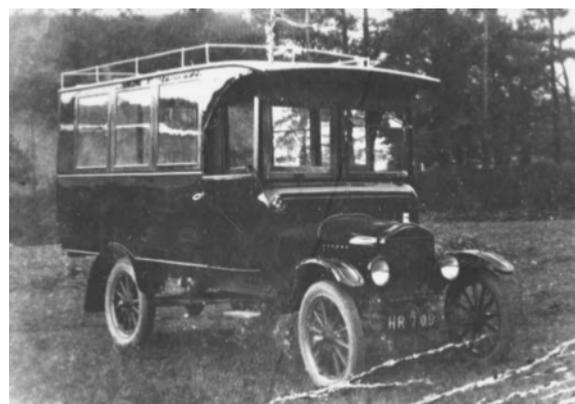
Dean Lane Farm

As a member of an extended family Ernest Wyatt may have benefited from the fact that *'everybody had money'*. On the other hand it is possible that such a spirit of independence would have prospered in any case, but a financial handout, or loan, from the family would no doubt have been welcome.

Charles and Thomas Jarvis, on their safe return from military service in World War 1, did continue to assist their father Henry, who was one of Fovant's blacksmiths, but they also developed the family's carrier service.

It is possible that John Jarvis, another 'safe-returner', son of John Jarvis (senior), Fovant's other blacksmith, and almost certainly part of the same extended family, came under the influence of Charles and Thomas, since, rejecting the family's trade, he bought a motor vehicle and started a taxi service.

Perhaps the establishment of Lever's garage virtually next door to Henry Jarvis's forge, plus the young men's experience of military motorised transport, prompted their decision to move away from horse-drawn vehicles.



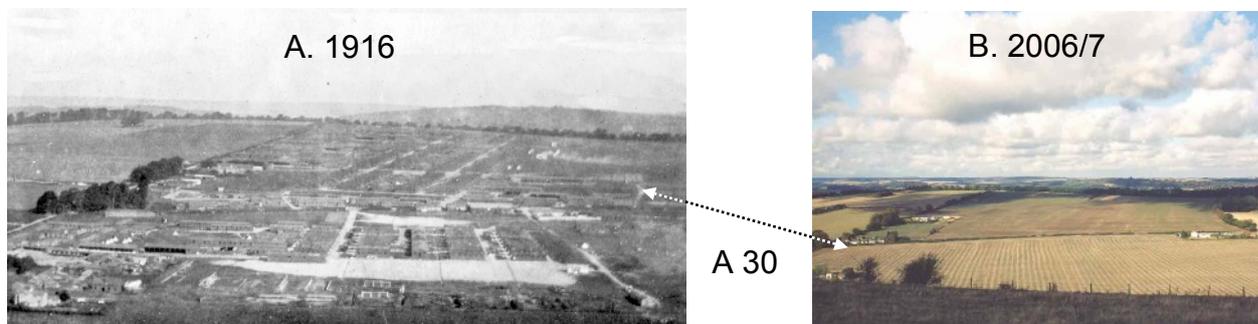
'Model T Ford Trooper conversion HR 709 run as a taxi and private hire service by John Jarvis, the "bus" was garaged in a small hut in the High Street'.

From 'History of Fovant' by Roy Nuttall.

STOP PRESS - I have recently learned that Henry Jarvis also had a son named John. In which case was it John, son of John, or John, son of Henry who started the taxi service? Suffice it to say that one of the Johns Jarvis, of Fovant, started a taxi service in the early 1920s.

14 – Return of the land

Many of the farms in the area, from Hurdcott in the east to Swallowcliffe in the west, had been affected to a greater or lesser extent by the establishment of the Military Training Camp at Fovant. Set in the centre of the complex, John Combes of East Farm would seem to have suffered more than most.



Each picture was taken from the same spot at the top of the Down. East Farm House is just out of shot in the bottom left-hand corner of each picture. SOME of John Combes's land used for SOME of the Military Camp takes up most of the rest of the pictures. Although virtually a century separates the two photographs, a comparison of them gives some indication of the uphill task faced by John Combes in his endeavours to restore A to B.

This task was further complicated in that John Combes, as a tenant farmer, was directly affected by the Earl of Pembroke's sale of his land and property in Fovant.

Could John Combes afford to buy?

- A small dairy herd had been retained during the wartime occupation by the camp.
 - The shop set up in the cow sheds had proved very popular and a financial success.
 - A considerable lump sum in compensation had been paid to him by the military authorities.
 - East Farm hosted a succession of paying guests during this period.
 - Considering the above his bank manager would probably agree to a request for a loan.
- 'Sitting tenants were to be treated very fairly ... they were to be given the option of tendering for the farms in their occupancy. If the tenders were considered reasonable they would be accepted, but if not the farm would be put up for sale by auction.'*
- Bob Combes Memoirs
- Having made a successful offer for East Farm, John Combes then became the owner-occupier of East Farm.

Then the hard manual work began to remove the hut foundations, hundreds of yards of disused roadways, trenches and other earthworks, rifle ranges, remains of the railway and any detritus left behind after the various sales held at the Camp.

The ranks of East Farm's older employees, who had worked there during the war, were now swelled by young, local, demobbed men asking for work. Some had worked at East Farm before the war, and others were from families known to John Combes. All were welcomed, for it needed their youth and strength to remove all traces of wartime occupation. Eventually all signs of the camp's existence were cleared away and the land was restored to its former agricultural purpose.

15 – Conclusion

The land may have been returned to its original purpose but there was one aspect of the Camps, the military badges on the hill, that were neither possible, nor desirable, to remove. They were cut by succeeding regiments in a spirit of 'we were here', rather like graffiti.

As the years passed the badges came to be seen as a memorial not only to the many men who passed through Fovant Military Camp on their way to the battlefields, but also to those who have lost their lives in the many wars that have been waged since then.



Annually, usually in July, a Drumhead service of Remembrance is held at East Farm. Additionally, on the nearest Sunday to the national day of remembrance in November, the village holds a church service of Remembrance. A wreath is then laid at the village war memorial where Fovant men who did not return from World Wars 1 and 2 are remembered.



Ex-serviceman Wally Barrow laying the Fovant wreath at our Village Hall.

Fovant men lost in World War 1

George Bracher *	Belgium	TC
Sidney Carpenter	?	
Vivian Clay	France	Th
Reginald Dorrington	France	Th
Ronald Ewence	Mesopotamia	
Bertie Goodfellow	At sea	PNB#
Henry Hardiman	France	Th
Cyril Lever	At sea	PNB#
George Lever	Norway	
Albert Macey	France	Th
James Mullins	France	Th
William Penny	France	Th
Walter Perret	Belgium	TC
Frank Sanger	At sea	PNB#
George Shergold	Belgium	TC
John Shorland	At sea	PNB#
Frank Simper	Turkey	
Christopher Usher	France	Th

One of the many tragedies of World War 1 is that so often the dead have no known grave. This was particularly true of the men of Fovant, nine of whom are commemorated as names on memorials to the missing.

'Over four million men went to France and three quarters of a million stayed there. We won the war, but we lost the peace' from 'Tommy' by Richard Holmes.

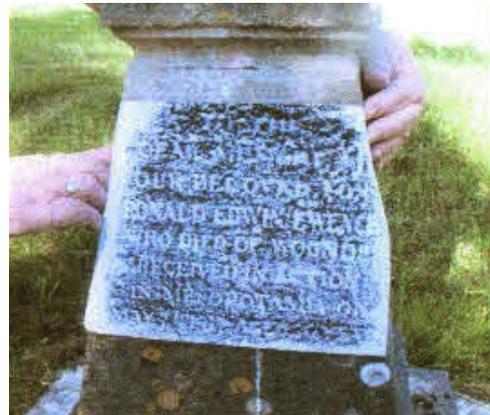
* George Bracher relative of the 'safe returner' George Bracher. #PNB = Portsmouth Naval Memorial
TC =Tyne Cot in Belgium and Th =Thiepval in France, are both World War 1 cemeteries.

It has always been important for grieving families to have a burial place at which to spend time mourning the loss of a loved one. 'No known grave' meant that their men's bodies had never been found – only a carved name on a memorial in some foreign country indicated that they had even existed.

Two Fovant families solved this problem by adding their son's name to an existing family headstone.



Henry Fred Hardiman – Nelson Batt. R.N.D. Killed in Belgium October 28th 1917. Aged 19



The inscription is only discernible through the use of a frottage technique (like brass rubbing) It can be read but not easily, so, what it says is ...

To the dear memory of our beloved son Ronald Edwin Ewence who died of wounds received in action in Mesopotamia on May 7th 1917. Aged 20

Some surnames feature on the list of those who were lost and that of those who returned

Lost

- George Bracher
- Bertie Goodfellow
- Cyril and George Lever
- Frank Simper
- Walter Perret
- William Penny
- Sidney Carpenter

Returned

- George Bracher
- Aaron and George Goodfellow
- Jack, Ralph, Alfred jnr and Sidney Lever
- Edward and John Simper
- James Perret
- Sydney Penny
- Reginald Carpenter

So their families would be torn between sorrow for their lost sons, brother, husbands and fathers, and rejoicing at the safe return of other loved ones.

The fact that not all 'lost' and 'safely returned' men are listed here doesn't mean that there was no connection between those above and the complete lists mentioned earlier. Extended families seem to be the order of the day in most villages, and Fovant was no exception. Furthermore village inter-marriage made for even greater integration – check the maiden names of the wives and you will find a network of inter-relationship.

Having seen these boys grow up together, the whole village would mourn each individual loss – one in 1914, one in 1915, three in 1916, five in 1917 and six in 1918. No wartime year was free of loss and the annual numbers obviously increased as the battles in Europe, and beyond, intensified.

There were of course gains, which, while they couldn't possibly balance the loss of the men, certainly benefited many of the people of the village in a variety of ways. *'Everybody had money'*, but some made more than others. Several, notably the Jarvis and Wyatt families, made that money work for them. Money beget money could have been a motto for both families.

Jarvis – village blacksmiths. Henry at the southern end of the village and John at the northern. Both offered stabling as well as the usual range of a blacksmith's work. In addition Henry ran a carrier service and may have leased premises to a photographer.

Henry's sons Charles and Thomas, and John's son, also named John, were 'safe-returners'. After they were demobilised these young men branched out in that Charles and Thomas, although they assisted their father, developed the family carrier service, while John bought a motor vehicle and started a taxi service.

Undoubtedly family money financed these ventures in the expectation of greater financial return.

Wyatt – Thomas, master baker, and his wife, Sarah Todd (née Jarvis) laundress and landlady, also added to their income during World War 1. John, brother of Thomas was *'something of an invalid, but he worked on the cress beds'*.*

Ernest, son of Thomas and Sarah, and Sidney son of John were both 'safe returners'. On their return, Ernest, after working as a dairy man at Manor Farm, bought the small dairy herd which was the basis of his eventual financial success as the owner of a farm. When the National Stores in the village High Street gave up their tenancy of the building, Sydney, son of John, took it over and established a newsagent's shop there.

I doubt John senior had sufficient funds to assist his son, but extended families tend to close ranks to solve a problem, and it is quite possible that Thomas bankrolled his nephew Sidney as well as his son Ernest.

Largely speaking none of these young men followed in their father's footsteps. Why?

Possible reasons

- Broader outlook with regard to civilian employment.
- Influence of having met people from other walks of life ... and countries.
- New attitudes towards work and leisure.
- For them the village they left had changed for ever.
- The impossibility of going back
- Adapting to the spirit of the times ... grateful but guilty survivors wanting to move on.
- The world was becoming their oyster.

We all think we are immortal when we are young, but these young men, having witnessed war in all its horrific, gory detail, had been shown that life could be fleeting.

Almost certainly they had seen good friends killed in the most dreadful way, and one has to wonder what their mental, if not physical, state was when they came home.

Perhaps independence from your parents was not then as much a feature of the young as it is today, but there's definitely a feeling of distancing. There seems to be a need to do their own thing.

* According to Peter Wyatt, his great nephew

After demobilisation not all the men wished to strike out and explore pastures new. Many had been farm labourers before the war and longed to get back to their pre-war normality – but of course you can't go back. Change or stagnate is ever the order of the day.

Many farmers, particularly John Combes at East Farm, recognising this truth, set about introducing mechanisation to their farms. It was progress, and the men may have grumbled about changing age-old practices, but the days of 'Captain Swing' were long past, and they absorbed gradual change without consciously noticing it happening.

Fovant's days of being a 'boom' village were also in the past, and no doubt the villagers also voiced their disapproval of changes which had crept up on them during that period of increased financial prosperity. Not the least of these changes was the apparent 'flightiness' of the young women, but what else did the older generation expect to happen when 20,000 eligible young men arrived on their doorstep.

Some of the women certainly 'kept the home fires burning' but on the whole the younger women, having abandoned the monotony of domestic service, took advantage of new employment opportunities. Living for the moment they enjoyed greater personal freedom, a higher disposable income, were footloose and fancy free, and out for a good time. Who could blame them?

No doubt the elders grumbled and, equally likely, the young ignored them and went on their merry way. It was ever thus.

'British social life was beginning to change rapidly. Moral standards slipped as jazz, cinema, bobbed hair and short skirts made their appearance... moral decorum was not necessarily preserved.'

From 'We Danced All Night'
by Martin Pugh



'Flappers' in the 1920s

I expect there were many people in the country who danced all night when peace was finally declared. However with the dawn, reality kicked in as the social consequences of four years of a devastating war became apparent. As the populace became disillusioned working class unrest increasingly found political expression, which eventually led to the formation of both the Labour Party and the Trade Unions.

The people of the village could not be unaware of this National activity, but we can only surmise how much they were affected by it.

But that's another story ...

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