

EMBSAY-WITH-EASTBY and WORLD WAR ONE

COMORTS FOR THE SOLDIERS AND OTHER CHARITABLE WORKS

KNITTING

At the outbreak of the war, almost the first response by women, children and convalescent soldiers (the latter often as a rehabilitation therapy) was to start knitting furiously, many taking their work with them everywhere they went. Often dismissed by historians as “emotional labour”, mainly to give women a sense of being useful, this was not in fact a minor contribution to the war effort.

The Army simply could not cope with demands on their supplies – Each soldier was only issued with 3 pairs of socks every 6 months. They were grateful for the 970,000 pairs of socks knitted and despatched by the end of November 1914 alone.

Something as simple as a spare pair of dry socks could prevent trenchfoot and frostbite (a serious condition which could easily lead to amputation of toes or feet). Socks were quickly worn out by long hours of marching, and often waterlogged. In winter, soldiers & sailors were desperately in need of warm “body belts”, mufflers, cardigans, mittens, balaclava helmets and scarves to stave off hypothermia.



The efforts of inexperienced knitters were a favourite subject for humorous cartoons



Schoolboys knitting for England, at Tibberton, near Droitwich



SEWING

Another traditional domestic craft deployed for the war effort was sewing. Men needed kit-bags, mosquito nets, shirts, and vests. Refugees needed garments of all kinds.

As the numbers of wounded increased, so did the need for handkerchiefs, nightshirts, orderlies' aprons, dressing gowns, bandages, pillow cases, hot-water bottle covers, and blankets.

That well-known tongue twister "Sister Susie's sewing shirts for soldiers" originates from a popular First World War song.

The British Red Cross and the commercial firms, such as Weldon's, issued patterns for nurses' uniforms and surgeons' operating gowns.

By the end of the War the British Red Cross has received and distributed over 15.5 million hand-sewn garments.

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Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers



Written by
R. P. WESTON.

Composed by
HERMANN E. DAREWSKI.

Sung by

JACK McARDLE

in J. C. WILLIAMSON'S

Stupendous Extravaganza Pantomime

"CINDERELLA"

Staged by CHAS. WENMAN.

By Special Arrangement
with FRANCIS,
DAY & HUNTER, London.

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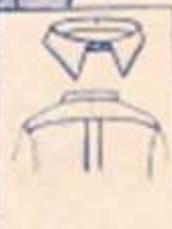
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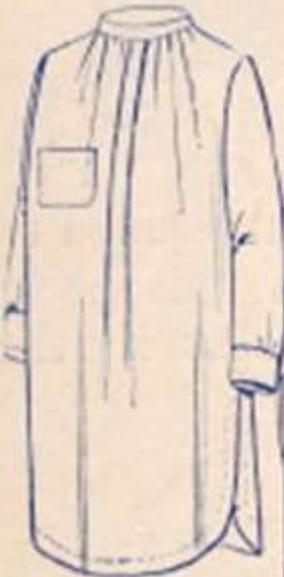


50360. Weldon's Improved Bed
Jacket for Hospital use.

One size, 42 in. length. Requires 2 1/2 yds.
of 3/4 in. flannel.

50362. Weldon's practical Day
Shirt for Soldiers and Sailors.

Sizes: 32 in., 34 in., and 36 in. neck.
Requires 2 1/2 yds. of 3/4 in. flannel, or with
collar 3 1/2 yds.



50361. Weldon's Flannel
Helmet for the troops.
Very comfortable in
wear, quickly made,
and thoroughly
practical.

Requires 1 yd. of 3/4 in. grey
or blue flannel, and cotton
binding.



50358. Nightshirt to open at back
for Hospital use.

Pattern for each size, 32 in., 34 in., 36 in., and 38 in.
Requires 2 yds. of 3/4 in. flannel or English.

Ladies calling at
WELDON'S
PATTERN SALON,
20-22, Southampton
Street, Strand,
London,
can receive any
information desired
about making
garments for our
Troops.

50359. Nightshirt to open back and
front for Hospital use.

Pattern for each size, 32 in., 34 in., and 36 in.
Requires 2 yds. of 3/4 in. flannel or English.

WELDON'S, LTD., Fashion Publishers, Southampton Street, Strand, London.



SOME OF SUSIE'S SISTERS SEWING SAND-BAGS.

“SMOKES” FOR SOLDIERS

The dangers of smoking were not recognised at this time. A pipe or a cigarette were considered manly accessories, and an essential means of relaxation in the trenches. (Ladies, of course, did not smoke in public.)

Tobacco was cheap, and the soldiers craved a smoke to relieve stress. Donating to a tobacco fund, such as Lady Denman’s Smokes for Soldiers’ Fund, was regarded as an important contribution to soldiers’ and sailors’ welfare. Cigarettes were preferred over pipes because they were smaller, less fiddly, easier to carry in one’s kit-bag, and could be smoked in the rain, and on the march.

They were also a useful propaganda tool – issued in their millions, cigarette cards provided collections of illustrations showing important leaders, women in war work, propaganda posters, Allied flags & uniforms, etc.



I'M AS FIT AS A FIDDLE
AND QUITE HAPPY TOO
BUT I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE
A NICE LETTER FROM YOU.



SYD
A. E.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A CIGARETTE TO
MAKE A SOLDIER SMILE!

EGG COLLECTION

In November 1914 the National Egg Collection was launched, and proved hugely successful. The idea was to provide a nutritious, fresh, and easily transportable food to wounded soldiers in hospital.

During the first year of the war, encouraged by the War Office and Queen Alexandra as the scheme's patron, an average of 200,000 eggs were collected and distributed via over 2,000 local depots, run by churches and volunteers. The railways transported them free of charge to a central warehouse in London for distribution.

The task of collecting eggs was particularly popular with children.

"Eggograms" were even used as a morale booster – the donor would write their name and address on the egg hoping for an appreciative letter from the soldier who received it.

The scheme was wound down in March 1919 after 41 million eggs had been collected (32 million of which were sent to France & Belgium).



GIFT PARCELS

Princess Mary, only 17, quietly and dutifully followed her mother, the Queen, around on hospital visits. But in November 1914 she launched her own appeal in the newspapers for a scheme which was a immediate success.

'I want you all to help me send a Christmas present from the whole nation to every sailor afloat and every soldier at the Front'

A small brass tin was to be sent to each serving man (including colonial troops & POWS) ; The first contained a picture of the princess, a Christmas card, 20 cigarettes, a pipe, lighter and tobacco; non-smokers received a pencil and khaki writing case; there was a pencil made from a bullet and sweets for young boys, and chocolates for nurses. As supplies ran short other items were substituted such as combs, tobacco pouches, and shaving brushes.

It was a logistical nightmare, and only 1/3rd were delivered by Christmas, but eventually over 2½ million reached their destination.



The Christmas Tin, 1914



Delivery of the tins to British soldiers

Gift parcels were often arranged by local communities for their own “boys”, especially at Christmas, as well as millions sent by individuals to their sons, brothers and sweethearts.

Encouraged by the example of Queen Alexandra and the Queen Dowager (“May of Teck”), parcels of clothes and toys were also often donated by local groups for the most needy widows, and for orphans’ homes. The War Office recognised the importance of parcels to troop morale and gave the transportation of Royal Mail bags the same priority as ammunition. A letter could reach a soldier in the trenches within two days via a network of depots, including field post offices set up in barns, cellars and tents behind the front lines.



SUGGESTED CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR BRITAIN'S "BLUE" AND "KHAKI" BOYS.

CHAMOIS LEATHER WAISTCOAT.



Send for Christmas List. Price 6d. redeemable.

With long sleeves and back of same leather. Very warm and comfortable. Does not take up much room under jacket.

- Natural Colour — — 21/-
- In Brown Chamis — 25/-
- Extra long, in Dark Brown 35/-
- Superior Quality, extra long, in Brown or Grey — 45/-

SLEEPING CAPS.

The favourite Cap with men of both forces. Can be worn as ordinary cap or turned down over face and neck, as illustrated. In khaki or navy. Each 2/6 and 3/6



The FLANDERS WAISTCOAT.



CARDIGAN JACKETS.



Khaki Wool Cardigans. Medium and heavy weight, fine protection from cold. Price each 7/11

Special Quality Cardigans for sailors. In Navy Wool, Scotch Make. Each 7/11

A most comfortable garment for wear on active service. Can be worn open or buttoned up as best required. Made in Fawn Fleece, light in weight, but strong and 18/6 & 21/- warm. Also made in Blue Fleece for Naval Officers. 21/-

This waistcoat is also made in soft tan Leather, lined all wool. 50/-

Grand Christmas Bazaar Now Open.

A. W. GAMAGE, L^D. HOLBORN, LONDON, E.C.



POSTING TO SOLDIERS

An average of 12.5 million letters were delivered to soldiers and sailors every week. And then there were the parcels from families and home parishes – packed with those luxuries which helped the men – and nurses – to cope with life on active service : squashed cakes, home-baked pies, sweets and cigarettes.

The British Red Cross and St John's Ambulance worked together to send out parcels to British prisoners of war. Parcels of food, each weighing about 10 pounds, were delivered fortnightly to every prisoner who had been registered.

The standard emergency parcel contained: three tins of beef , $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of cocoa, two pounds of biscuits, two tins of cheese or bread, a tin of dripping, 2 tins of condensed milk, and 50 cigarettes.

Each parcel was intended to keep two men going for approximately one week.



Ladies in London, packing socks to send to soldiers at the front.



Embsay and Eastby Ladies get busy.

The ladies' section of the **Embsay War Distress Committee** knitted and sewed furiously throughout the whole war, making clothes for soldiers, sailors as well as the refugees "*who felt the cold very much.*" Canvassers were sent regularly around the village collecting funds to pay for materials, and the village branch of the **Girls' Friendly Society** were assigned their fair share of knitting, under the direction of Miss Ada Harrison, of Rockville.

Under instructions from 49 year old Miss Mary Martin, in November 1914 alone, 100 balaclava helmets were produced by 21 ladies in knitting circles held at Rockville House, the home of solicitor's wife, Mrs Newall.

In addition to monthly gift parcels to local men who were POWs, every December, the ladies and the Girls' Friendly Society also raised funds, purchased gifts, and packed up Christmas parcels for Embsay and Eastby soldiers, sailors and POWs.

The West Yorkshire Pioneer and East Lancashire News (November 20th, 1914)

"The following list of garments, etc., have been forwarded to the committee:-

Mrs. Heyworth, Radcliffe House, 3 gray helmets;
Miss Wright, Eastby, 2 pairs of socks;
Mrs. Parkinson, The Square, 4 nightshirts, 2 pairs knee caps, 20 bandages;
Miss Davy, The Square, 4 pairs socks, 7 handkerchiefs, 2 table cloths;
Miss Annie Mitton, 3 pairs mittens;
Miss Bertha Jackson, 1 scarf;
Miss Marion Phillip, 1 pair cuffs;
Miss Neta Dawson, 1 pair cuffs; Mr. Joseph Davy, 6 pairs socks;
Mrs. Anderton, 6 pairs socks and 3 shirts;
Mrs. Dove, 1 pair sheets, 3 pillow cases, and 4 towels;
Miss Nixon (The Square), 2 pairs socks and 2 body belts;
Mrs. Phillip, Old Post Office, 2 pairs socks, 2 pairs mittens, 1 body belt, and 1 helmet;
Miss Birch, 2 pairs socks and 4 pairs mittens.

The Ladies' Committee have provided the following:- 21 shirts, 26 pairs of socks, 45 body belts, 25 pairs of mittens for soldiers, 25 pairs mittens for sailors. All the above articles have been packed and despatched to the (1) Expeditionary Forces, (2) Red Cross Society, and (3) Embsay recruits in training."

Local children also did their bit. Five cousins, Sara, Winnie and Beaver, Annie and Ever Scott sent 2s 6d to the Craven Herald newspaper's appeal for the soldiers' tobacco fund in October 1914. The school, under Miss Cowley and Miss Earnshaw, encouraged the children to run flag days for charitable causes.

Before long both villages, and their church and chapels, were holding regular and frequent social events to raise money for a variety of causes: these whist drives, recitals and flag days continued throughout the war.

For example, in September, 1918, the Allotment Holders and Cottage Gardeners of Embsay and Eastby held their annual show, raising £30 to be divided between the Soldiers' and Sailors' Christmas Parcels Fund, and the Prisoners of War Fund.

Embsay had its own local **egg collection** depot "near the Elm Tree", open 3 evenings a week, while Miss Christabel Snowden of the Garth (Primrose House) also organised door-to-door collections all through the war. She, her 7 helpers and the Girls' Friendly Society collected between 70 and 150 eggs every week.

Craven Herald and Wensleydale Standard **(25th October, 1918)**

***"EMBSAY War Distress Committee.** – A meeting was held in the British School on Monday evening, the following members being present:- Mrs. Brown, Mrs Cowley, Mrs. Heyworth, Miss Heron, Miss Harrison, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Mattock, Rev. C.W. Brown, Mr. Bell, Mr. Butterfield, Mr. Hargreaves, Mr. Ideson, Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Cowley, hon. secretary. Mr. Wilkinson presided.*

The sub-committee, appointed to prepare a list of men eligible for the Christmas gifts, presented their report, which consisted of 74 names upon they had all agreed, and a further 13 names which they recommended. It was resolved that the 87 names be approved. The appeal for subscriptions resulted in a sum of £26 18s being raised... The total sum available up to date was £56 18s. It was reported that the Allotment Holders' Association had suggested that a sum of 7s 6d be sent to each soldier...

It was resolved to send the usual monthly parcel to the prisoners of war in December, in addition to the Christmas gift. ... Mr. Brown and Mr. Hargreaves were elected to despatch the gifts, and parents and friends should furnish the correct addresses of the men, and with this object in view, a list of the men will be placed in the Post Office window.

It was resolved to make an appeal for the Prisoners of War Fund during December."



Enjoying Christmas gift parcels at the Front.

Illustrated London News, December, 1914

Christmas parcels sent by Embsay-with-Eastby Ladies.

December 1915 :

Each Christmas parcel contained:

A pair of socks, a pipe, tobacco, cigarettes, a Christmas cake, a ½ lb box of chocolate, and one florin coin.

December 1916 : Sent to over 50 men

Parcels for those on active service overseas contained:

One pair of socks (presented by the ladies' committee); 3s in coin; tobacco; Xmas cake; box of Oxo cubes; chocolate and biscuit tablets; tin of sardines; tin of baked beans; malted milk tablets; and a Christmas card; total value 10s 6d.

To men in training camps in England:

A postal order for 3s 6d

December 1918: parcels were sent to 87 soldiers and 3 POWs. *Unfortunately details of their contents that year are not known.*