

College and WW1

This is the story of how the girls and staff were affected by the First World War, 1914 - 1918

Events before 1914

The story starts before 1914. There were premonitions of war in Cheltenham long before they were felt by the general public: College history shows an uncanny anticipation of what would actually happen in 1914.

If you were in St. Hilda's House you might have been a member of the volunteer fire brigade. This was formed in 1904 together with an improved fire drill procedure throughout the whole of College in 1909 in case of any future enemy invasion.

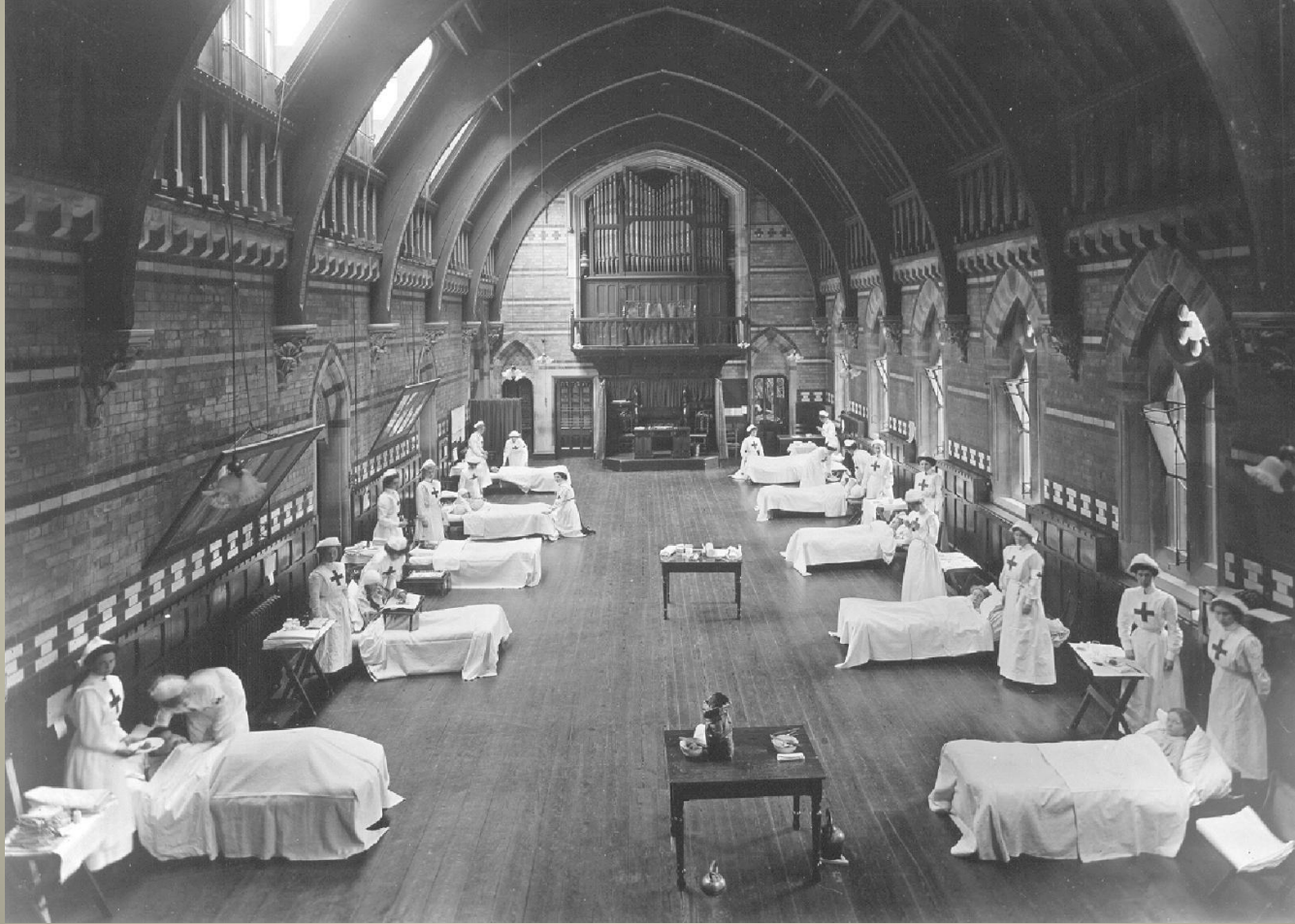
Events Before 1914



College Branch of Red Cross

In 1910 a College branch of the Red Cross was formed with the aim of letting women 'take their share of the burden of national defence.' Regular inspections of training procedures were carried out between 1910 – 1914 and you might very well have taken part in this one in Lower Hall, either as a pretend patient or a trainee nurse.

College Branch of Red Cross



Princess Hall

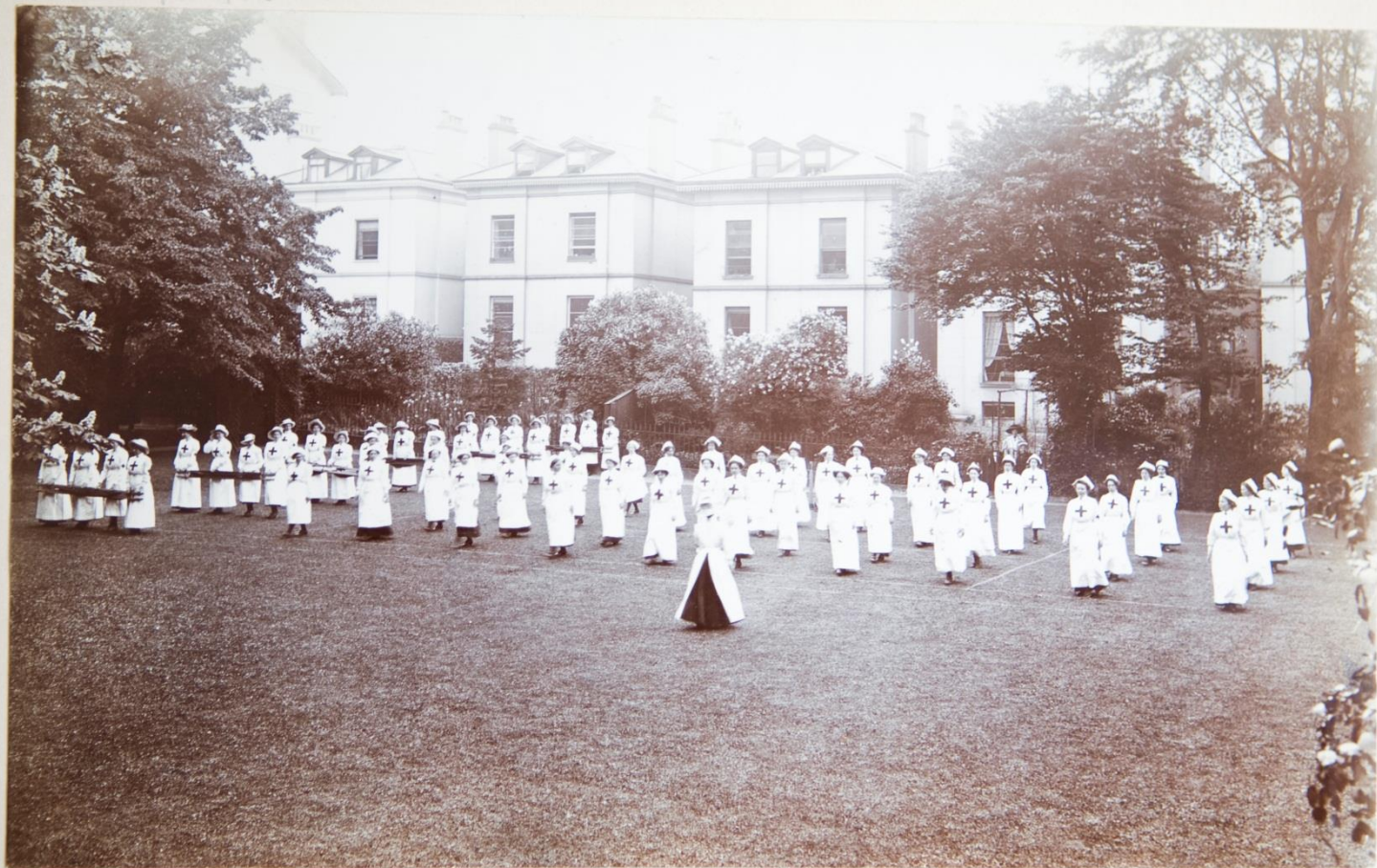


Even the Princess Hall, was used for the Red Cross inspections. Students were entered for First Aid and nursing exams and by 1914 over 400 pupils held certificates.

Straw Mattress Making



Stretcher Drill



Stretcher drill. 1909.

L14 – emergency hospital ward



Operating Theatre



Here is a classroom set out as an operating theatre: here the young pretend patient is doing a very convincing impression for the camera of being under an anaesthetic in preparation for an operation. The College laboratories were also used to prepare anaesthetics for the Royal Society War Committee.

Laundry Duty



Field Kitchen



An Outdoor Hospital Ward



St Martin's Red Cross Hospital



ST. MARTIN'S RED CROSS HOSPITAL, CHELTENHAM.

St Martin's VAD

- In 1914, the practiced skills were needed for real as the first wave of front line casualties reached the Red Cross hospitals. Eversleigh boarding house (then next door to St Helen's in Parabola Road) was turned into an actual Red Cross Hospital. Each ward was named after a College boarding house and was fully staffed by Guild members and staff who volunteered to nurse using their free time away from teaching duties, often giving up all their holidays and weekends.

St Martin's Hospital Staff



In many cases girls volunteered to work at St Martin's as soon as they left College. All the Red Cross training they had done while at College was put to very good use as they tended the large numbers of wounded who arrived on an all too frequent basis from the battlefields of France and Belgium.

St Martin's Hospital Patients



Many patients were grateful for the care they received here, even though getting better often meant returning to the frontline battlefields.

Convalescing



Patients had a ready supply of books that could be borrowed from the College Library. As they gradually recovered from their injuries, they were also allowed to attend Prayers in the Princess Hall and to play cricket on Field.

St Martin's Hospital Poem

MEMORIES.

When this great war was declared
I soon in khaki stood
And went to do my duty
As every Briton should.

When out there in the trenches
Amidst the shot and shell
I thought of home and mother
While in that living hell.

I've seen my comrades falling
And heard the cannon roar;
A shock, a blinding flash
And then I knew no more.

I was sent to dear old England,
To S. Martin's (Downside Ward),
And tended there by Sisters,
Cared for as if a lord.

S. Martin's I'll ever remember,
The Commandant and staff so kind;
To my dying day in my heart
A thought for S. Martin's you'll find.

Here is a poem that appeared
in the 1916 College magazine.
It was written by a grateful ex-
patient, Private F Brooks of
the Suffolk Regiment.

Digging for Victory



Everyone who was still studying at College was expected to help in any way they could towards the war effort. At a time of food shortage, feeding over 500 boarders on a daily basis was a problem and College became smitten with 'Allotment Fever' as many boarding house gardens and various parts of the playing field were dug up to grow vegetables. All the girls were responsible for helping with this instead of playing all the usual sports. Rubbish from the boarding houses was collected and sorted for recycling by the girls – e.g. paper, bottles, tins and meat bones. The effects of the restricted war-time diet on the girls were carefully monitored with regular weigh-ins, a reduction in prep where possible and more time allowed for sleep.

Comfort Parcels

Girls were expected to contribute their own money towards buying items to place in 'comfort' parcels which were then sent out to the troops in the trenches and in the Royal Navy. The contents ranged from knitted mittens and electric torches to chocolate and tobacco and the letters of thanks, such as the ones you see here, were read out at Prayers so that the girls could see how much their contributions were appreciated by those who were enduring terrible conditions in the battlefield trenches.

The "War Workshop" at St Clare's Boarding House in Fauconberg Terrace was open daily except Saturday to past and present students, making amongst other things sunshields, sandbags and a periscope designed by a member of staff. There was also a Hospital Supply Depot making swabs and pneumonia jackets and the College labs in the Science Department were involved in making iodine for this depot.

Comfort Parcels

IN THE FIELD

(From the same officer as the first letter).

DEAR MISS FAITHFULL,

. . . I am afraid that my letter of the other day to you may have been a bit pessimistic, I hope not, but my wife discovered from my letters of about that time that I was very anxious, though I had no idea myself that I had given that fact away! The truth is we were desperately anxious; no one at home had any idea how very touch and go that heavy fighting at Ypres and south of it early this month was. We had no reserves, not a man, our line was broken in several places, and God knows how we restored it, but I think if the German troops had been quite the same quality as we met at first, our line would have been rolled up. The Prussian Guard Corps was good enough, but short of officers. One of our regiments engaged came out with the Quartermaster and seventy-five men out of over thirty officers and one thousand men.

However, that is past, we have had reinforcements, and shortened up our front, and have actually been able to get a large share of our troops into reserve, and wash them and clothe them afresh, and some of the regimental officers have even been given a few days' leave! So you can realise there is a lull.

Well, I'm afraid I have been gossiping and have almost forgotten to thank you and all your girls for thinking of us. Do thank them from us all, and tell them that they can have no idea how the men value things sent them from home, and the kind thoughts for them that prompt the gifts. . .

Yours sincerely

A LITTLE FARM IN BELGIUM.

November 28th, 1914.

DEAR MADAME,

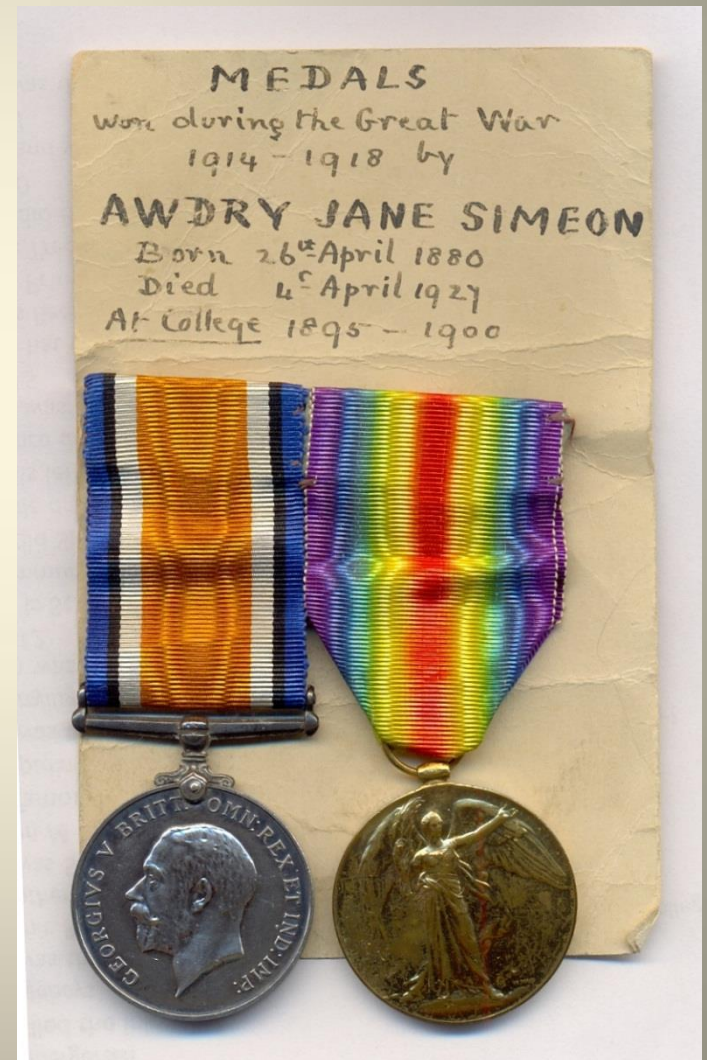
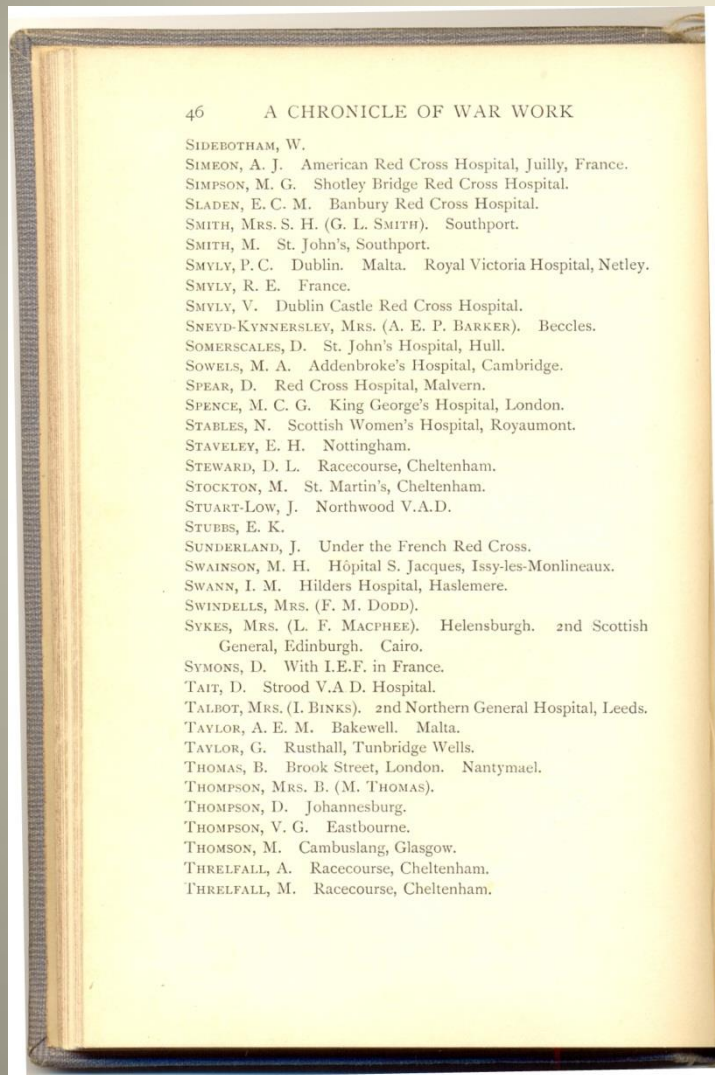
. . . The little electric torches have just come at the nick of time as our supply of candles has run out and there is a candle famine in our nearest town. Thank you ever so much for all you have sent. Now that the wet weather has begun, life in the trenches is not so pleasant. It is very hard to keep them dry, and as the soil is clay you may imagine we usually look as though we had been rolling in Thames mud. Your butler would indignantly slam the door in our faces, if we could come and pay you a

Guild X-Ray Machine



As well as providing the staff for St Martin's Hospital, the Guild also raised £560 to fund the purchase of a mobile X-ray unit. This was presented to the War Office by Guild in 1915.

War Work



New Careers

With many men fighting on the battlefields, new careers were opening up to girls once they had left College. This pamphlet entitled 'Table of Profession and Occupations for Girls' and dated 1915, lists all the many careers available in medicine, teaching, domestic science, agriculture, business, and other professions. This page lists some of the careers available within the Civil Service and details the qualifications needed, length of training in terms of time needed, the likely salary after training and future career prospects.

New Careers

V.—CIVIL SERVICE.

<i>PROFESSION.</i>	<i>Qualifications necessary.</i>	<i>Length.</i>	<i>Cost.</i>	<i>Where to train.</i>	<i>Salary.</i>	<i>Prospects, etc.</i>
A.						
i. Inspectors of Prisons and Reformatories ...	No definite qualifications, except for the Asst. Medical Inspector, who must be fully qualified.	...		Apply to the Home Office for information.	£250-400.	One Inspector of Reformatories, One Asst. Medical Inspector, and One Inspector of Prisons.
ii. Inspectors for Poor Law purposes ...	Central Midwives' Board Cert. desirable.	3 yrs. training as nurse.		...	£250-450.	A few posts under the L.G.B.
B.						
i. Factory inspector ...	Age 25-40 yrs. Ent. exam. by Civil Service Commission, and after 2 yrs. prob., exam. in Law relative to Factories, Workshops, etc	2 years.	Exam. fee £2.	Apply to Home Office for application form and nomination. Previous examination papers from Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswood, Fleet Street, E.C.	£200-550.	A few capable and highly qualified women are appointed to these posts.
ii. Investigator for women's industries	Univ. educ. with high honours.	3-4 years at least.	...	Apply to the Board of Trade for information.	Senior Investigator £450. Asst. Investigator £200-300.	Two posts under the Board of Trade.
C.						
Sanitary inspector ...	See I, F.	...	...	...	£250-450.	Same as B i.
D.						
i. Labour exchange ...	Usual clerical qualifications. Knowledge of industrial conditions.	...	...	Settlements, C.O.S., etc., for practical work. Lond. School of Economics, or Univ. course for theoretical.	Principal Officer for Women's Emplmt. (Lab. Ex. and Un-emplmt. Insur.) £400-450. Asst. £150-200. Clerks from £50. Chief Woman Inspector (N.H.I.) £400-550. Inspectors £300-400. Asst. Inspectors £100-300. Health Insurance Officers £80-150.	A few posts under the Board of Trade in connection with Lab. Exchanges, and about 5 posts as Women Investigators.
ii. Nat. Health Insurance Commission ...	Knowledge of indus. con. Organizing ability.	...	...	"		A few posts under the Nat. Health Commission.

Prayer Room and Roll of Honour



Prayer Room and Roll of Honour

The terrible losses in the First World War affected far more lives than any war before or since, and the Principal of the time, Miss Lilian Faithfull, was often called upon to break the news of the death of a relative to a girl, as well as to try to comfort the bereaved. She was often deeply impressed by their fortitude: one day I heard the news of the death of a student's brother, and, realising what it would mean to the sister, was so much of a coward that I feared to send for her. I need not have been afraid. An hour afterwards she passed me in the Hall, and as I called her she turned round, her face alight and smiling, and all she said was, 'I am far too proud to be sad.'

She wanted the girls to have a place of sanctuary, a place of quiet for private prayer and thought, so she established a prayer room near her own office. A book was placed in it with the names of all the brothers and fathers who were fighting, and the room was in constant use.

Atkinson, Capt. F.V.	2 nd Essex	
Bardsley, Lt. F.S.C.	6 th K's L'pool R ^g Rifles	Hall 10
Davidson, Lt. G.L.	The Loyal	
Forster, Pte. J.	R.N.D.	
Vassar-Smith, Capt.		
Bonhoure, Serg ^t N.	35 ^e d' Infanterie	
Ainsley, Pte. J.A.	Durham L.I.	France
Atkins, 2 nd Lt. C.	Ox: a Bucks L.I.	
Badcock, Lt. M.F.	2 nd Glo'sters	" "
Bowlby, Capt. H.R.	8 th Rifle Brig:	" "
Brown, " K.A.	5 th Scottish Rifles	" "
Cassels, " E.G.	11 th R. Sussex	" "
" " Lt. W.C.	1 st Worcesters	" "
†Crombie, Lt. E.	4 th Gordons	" " R.I.P.
Davies, Lt. B.E.	1 st Buffs	" "
Cole, Lt. A.P.	A.A.G.	
" " Capt. F.W.	1 st Glo'sters	" " July '16
Gardner, Lt. Col. H.M.	Lincolns	
Gibson, 2Lt. C.H.	1 st Manchesters	" "
Godfrey, " J.T.	R.E.	" "
Heaver, Pte. G.B.	H.A.C.	
Lawrie, 2Lt. H.C.O.	R.F.A.	
Lloyd, Lt. O.R.	Shrops. L.I.	" "
Machin, 2Lt. N.F.	Coldstream G.	" "
Newman, Capt.	3 rd Brahmans	Mesopotamia
Owen, Pte. R.	Austral ² Imp ^t F.	
Parkes, Lt. T.D.	1 st S. Staffs:	France May '16
" " Pte. J.W.	Artists' Rifles	" " "
†Pickop, 2Lt. J.T.G.	4 th R. Fus:	" " R.I.P.
Ramsden, Lt. J.W.A.	D. of W's West Rid?	" " twice wounded
Rentusch, Capt. S.H.	R. A.M.C.	Egypt
Sorby, 2Lt. W.	1 st K.O. Ghurkas	Mesopotamia
Wauchope, Capt. C.L.	Northampton	3 times wounded

War Time Prayers

LOOK
in thy mercy
we beseech
thee O LORD

ON THOSE WHO ARE CALLED
TO TASKS OF SPECIAL PERIL,
IN THE AIR OR BENEATH THE
SEA. Even there also shall Thy hand
lead them, and Thy right hand
shall hold them. help them to do
their duty with prudence, and with
fearlessness, confident that in life
or in death the Eternal God is
their refuge, and underneath them
are the Everlasting Arms. Grant
this for Jesus Christ's sake, Thy Son
our Lord.

O GOD
The STRENGTH

OF ALL THEM THAT PUT THEIR
TRUST IN THEE, WHOSE POWER
NO CREATURE IS ABLE TO RESIST.

WE flee to Thee for succour on behalf
of those who are now struggling in
the war.

PROSPER our armies, protect those
who are in danger, give help to the
wounded, recovery to the sick, rest
and refreshment to the dead, comfort
to the mourners.

AND in Thine Own good time restore
unto Thy people the blessings of peace.

GRANT THIS O FATHER
FOR JESUS CHRIST'S
SAKE, Amen,

War Time Prayers

This little book of 'Prayers for Use in Time of War' was handwritten in July 1915 by a pupil, Alice Hindson, in an Art Class in College. When offering it to the College Archives in 1983 she wrote that 'my generation heard these prayers read by Miss Faithfull morning after morning and I think that they meant a great deal to us all and are a memorial to that heart-rending time.'

I hope that all of these images give you some idea of what it was like to be in College at this time, and also an indication of the reserves of strength that girls and staff alike needed in order to face the war years with fortitude.

Written by Rachel Roberts, College Archivist , July 2018