

CHIN-WAG Newsletter

Villiers Park Educational Trust's commemoration of the First World War through extracts from the Old Etonian's and Eton Manor's CHIN-WAG Newsletter

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December 1914.

Our President

Since the issue of our last number, our President, Earl Roberts, has gone to his eternal rest. If we were proud of our association with him for his many acts of bravery and usefulness during his lifetime, we are all the more proud of the manner in which he met his death. At a time when duty has become of supreme national importance for every one of us, we mourn the loss of one who has acted up to that word throughout all his life, of one who never considered his private interests or convenience when the Country required his services. In the history of England, few more wonderful examples of obedience to duty can be recalled than Earl Roberts, already a man over 70 years of age, suffering under the loss of his only son, going out to South Africa to command our Armies in the Field against the Boers. Nothing more noble can be recalled than his action over 10 years later, at the age of 82, of going out to the Front, in spite of his great age and discarding all thought of danger, in order to encourage and cheer up the Indian soldiers whom he had loved so well, because he thought he would serve his country by so doing.

His affection for Eton was well known and anything that concerned Eton commanded his entire sympathy. We are not likely to forget the charm of his presence and the interest which he took in everything that he saw within the Clubs. He enquired fully about the organisation of the Clubs, and all our Members, about their work and about their play. Lord Roberts in a speech in July 1913 concluded by making an appeal to members of the Eton Boys' Clubs to do their duty to God, to their fellows and to the Empire, and wound up with a sentence which members will never forget as long as they live, "I would not have missed coming here to-night for anything."

A.R.W

In a letter from Capt. Villiers

I have read a great deal about trenches, but they are not quite what I expected. The object of the trench is to prevent rushes by the enemy, particularly at night, and also to give as much cover as possible against shrapnel and rifle fire. At the same time they must be as invisible as possible so that the aeroplanes cannot spot them, and direct the gun fire on to them. The trenches in which we were are from four to five feet deep and about three feet wide. Unfortunately the German long-range guns got the range, and they inflicted very heavy losses on the regiment on our left, though our losses were quite small. The noise of the shell fire is tremendous louder even than the thunderstorm through which the Ramblers passed one day last summer. The Germans have a gun which has been nicknamed "Black Maria" the shell from which bursts on touching the ground making a hole about four feet deep, and a cloud of black smoke. These shells are called "coal-boxes."

I was quite glad that I had done a course of gymnastics last year as you need to be very agile in taking cover, and I am sure that even Sergt-Major Roberts could not have moved quicker than I did.

Sports at the Club

Although the Army has taken many of our members and it, has been cold and wet, we have had fine runs out this month, It shows the keenness of its members, which, I hope will not wear off. Our best runners have gone, but I hope our new members will try and become as good as they were, so that we can run against other clubs with success, There are still more wanted and anyone can join by applying to me.

W.K

CHIN-WAG Charivaria

Anyway, if their Navy won't come out, we know their army is all at sea.

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We generally get Turkey and sausages together at Xmas, but this year it's a bit earlier, all we hope is that the Turkey will be done in time for Xmas dinner, although Germany will make a "hash" of it.



Please revisit www.villierspark.org.uk each month for the next edition of CHIN-WAG from a century ago.