

HERTS PAST POLICING

Recording life on the beat in Hertfordshire



DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCE

Soldiers in Town

Suggested Questions

What was the impact of thousands of soldiers being billeted in Hertfordshire?

Hertfordshire was a training ground for troops going out to the First World War and troops were mainly stationed in Watford, Bishop's Stortford and St Albans. With all the soldiers coming to Hertfordshire for training they needed to be billeted in local homes. It fell to the police to accompany the billeting officers when they went round homes to tell you how many soldiers you would be putting up – for a pittance! The effect on local areas of having thousands of young men billeted and training in their towns was enormous.

Themes and ideas to explore:

- Contribution of the police
- Attitudes of local people
- Soldiers' behaviour
- Animals in the war
- Christmas away from home

Suggested questions and discussion points:

The process of billeting

How did billeting work?

How much notice did people get that they would be hosting soldiers?

Reactions to billeting

How did towns react to the arrival of billeted soldiers?

Imagine how it felt to see your town full of soldiers carrying guns

Why were some billeting arrangements considered unsatisfactory?

What view of the soldiers do the documents give us?

Why were some of the less well-off hosts disappointed?

Did all billeting families treat the soldiers well?

Reckless and badly behaved soldiers

What sort of bad behaviour from soldiers was recorded?

What were the range of punishments they were given?

Why do you think some of the incidents were dealt with quite leniently?

What reasons might you give for so much bad behaviour and pranks by the soldiers?

Stampeding horses

Why do you think there were so many horses in town?

What reasons were given for them stampeding?

Christmas for the troops

What was the attitude of locals to the troops in their town over Christmas?

What was organised to cater for the troops at Christmas?

Despite all these efforts to entertain the troops, how do you think it really felt to be away from home at Christmas?