

The work of the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund 1945 – 1947

Note: Originally mentioned in our piece “The Great Escape – The Farnhill Connection”, this article examines in further detail the work of the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Committee, May 1945 – March 1947.

Introduction

Throughout the war the people of Kildwick and Farnhill gave their full support to those who were in the services and regular gifts of money were made by, amongst others, the Methodist Chapel¹. After the end of the war, further information came to light about individual fund-raising efforts; including:

For the past five years Mrs. Oliver of Farnhill has held fortnightly whist drives at her home and has sent the proceeds to members of the forces from Farnhill. She is giving five shillings to each serving member on their return to civilian life.

Note: £1 in 1945 is equivalent to around £40 at today's prices².

At the start of May 1945, with the end of the war in Europe within clear sight, a joint meeting of Farnhill Parish Council and Kildwick Parish Meeting agreed to form a Welcome Home Committee, to arrange a series of local entertainments for the returning combatants. By the middle of the month the committee had been formed and had launched a “Welcome Home Fund” – with Eric Zillessen as its secretary – which set themselves a fund-raising target of £1000, which represented £10 for each of the 100 men and women of the two villages who had served during the war.

The Farnhill Institute and Methodist Church immediately confirmed that they would provide their facilities free for fund raising activities and Mrs. Sharpe, the tenant of Kildwick Hall, announced that she would support the fund with a grand garden party, to be held in the grounds of the Hall.

How the fund progressed – a summary of major fund-raising events

Between June 1945 and March 1947, the committee organised the following major fund-raising events.

Note: Reports of these events and the progress of the fund appear in the Craven Herald and Keighley News for the period.

Date	Event	Raised	Fund Total
9/6/45	Dance and whist drive at the Institute	not known	-
26/6/45	Bring and Buy sale at Kildwick vicarage	£20	-
6/7/45	-	-	£45 15s 9d
7/7/45	Donation by Mrs. C. W. Sharpe of Kildwick Hall	£50	-
7/7/45	Garden Party and dance at Kildwick Hall	£90	over £200
21/7/45	-	-	£334
14/9/45	Gala Field Day and dance	£40	£440
17/10/45	Whist and old-time dancing at the Institute	not known	-
21/10/45	Performance of Haydn's "Creation" at St. Andrew's	£26 14s 10d	£501 2s 10d
13/11/45	Bring and Buy sale at the Institute	£90	-
14/11/45	Old-time dance	not known	-
24/11/45	Children's concert in Methodist school room	not known	-
15/12/45	"The Optimists" concert party performed without charge; all profits to the fund	not known	-
1/2/46	"The Dong Lee Sketch Party" performed at the Methodist School; all proceeds to the fund	not known	£714 6s 10d
20/3/46	Sutton Amateur dramatic society perform "Burning Gold" in Methodist school room	not known	-
2/4/46	-	-	£775
6/4/46	Spring Fayre at the Institute	over £70	£850
27/4/46	First Distribution	-	-
6/7/46	Sports events and a Fancy Dress Parade	not known	
24/8/46	Kildwick Races	£148	over £1000
8/3/47	Final Distribution	-	-

Major fund-raising events

Kildwick Hall Garden Party – July 7th 1945

Perhaps the most significant fund-raising event of 1945 was a Garden Party, held at Kildwick Hall on July 7th. It was reported in the Keighley News:

Welcome Home

Kildwick Hall Scene of Pretty Garden Party

A highly-successful effort by the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Committee took the form of a garden party and social gathering, held at Kildwick Hall on Saturday, by kind permission of Mrs. Sharpe ... the openers were Gunner Clarence Moore and Flight-Lieutenant Marcel Zillessen, both ex-prisoners of war, who expressed the delight it gave them to be free men once more ... Mr. E Zillessen, secretary of the fund, thanked Mrs. Sharpe for her kind hospitality.

A baby show attracted a large number of contestants from a wide area, and the awards ... were: Up to six months, 1. Maureen Watkinson; 2. Michael Condon. Six to 12 months, 1. Ian Armstrong; 2. Graham Hodgson. Twelve months to two years, 1. Neville Barrett; 2. Colin Waugh.

During the afternoon and evening selections were rendered on the lawn by the Skipton Prize Band, under the direction of Mr. Wilkinson, and costume dances were given by Miss Irene Ogden (Keighley) and her pupils. About 500 sat down to tea, served by ladies interested in the effort. There was a home and produce stall, and sideshows included a treasure hunt, throwing at the wicket, quoits,, and a "Mystic Lady". Donkey and pony rides, supervised by John Hargreaves, Dennis Wilcock, Frank Barrett, and Cedric Lister, were very popular ...

The day's proceedings ended with a dance in the Kildwick and Farnhill Institute which was very largely attended. The sum of £89 was raised by the day's proceedings for the Welcome Home fund effort, which now stands at over £200 towards the target of £1000.

Gala Field Day – 14th September 1945

As the summer of victory came to an end, the committee organised a sports day and evening dance, as reported in the Craven Herald:

Farnhill Holds a Field Day

A successful sports and field day, arranged by the committee of the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund, were held on Saturday.

The proceedings commenced with a fancy dress parade, which marshalled near Kildwick Church and led by the band of the 1st Kildwick and Farnhill Troop of Boy Scouts, passed through Farnhill to the cricket field. There was a large number of entrants in the competition and the judges, Mr. and Mrs. T Finan, made their awards as follows: Roy Bottomley (Breton onion seller), Irene Butterfield (Arabian bride), Barbara Wilson (Quality Street), Anne Whitaker (Poland), Margaret Hartley (Tyrolean), Irvine Butterfield (Old Seville).

Sports results were as follows: Girls – up to six years, 1 Gill Walmsley, 2 Lesley Anderson; six to seven years, 1 Patricia Roe, 2 Elaine Inskip; seven to eight, 1 Gillian Hargreaves, 2 Elizabeth Tidswell; eight to ten, 1 G. Hargreaves, 2 Margaret Hartley; ten to 12, 1 Rosemary Hargreaves, 2 Freda Brown; 12 to 14, 1 Irene Earle, 2 Joyce Morrell. Boys – up to six years, 1 Edward Hall, 2 Peter Sayers; six to eight, 1 Max Parker, 2 Roy Bottomley; eight to ten; 1 David Whitaker, 2 Colin Walmsley; ten to 12, 1 D. Whitaker, 2 Peter Richardson; 12 to 14, 1 John Ridd, 2 Gordon Allen. Adult races; 100 yards – 1 Derek Sellars, 2 Herbert Brown; 440 yards – 1 Derek Sellars, 2 Herbert Brown; fell race – 1 Herbert Brown, 2 Derek Sellars; Gretna Green race – 1 G.D. Brown and Vera Walmsley, 2 Jack Kitson and Eva Steel; pillow fight – Gunner Layness. The tug of war was won by a team of soldiers from the Durham Light Infantry.

Course officials were: Starter, Mr. T. Finan; judges, Rev. J.K. Calvert and Mr. B. Crick; announcer, Mr. G. Brown; stewards, Messrs C. Lister, H. Smith, J. Carter, A.F. Jones and C. Hill.

A ladies' cricket match between teams representing Farnhill and Glusburn was won by the latter. The fancy dress and sports prizes were handed to the winners by Mrs. John Horsfall.

Lady members of the committee were in charge of tea and ice-cream stalls. Donkey and pony rides were a popular feature with the children and these were in charge of Messrs. C.W. Hagar, D. Wilcock and A. Clarkson. Conjuring displays and Punch and Judy shows were given by Mr. J. Liddlemore, Keighley.

In the evening a largely attended dance was held in the Institute. Miss Dorothy Simpson was M.C., and the music was provided by the Hall Wood Players.

Prior to Saturday, over £400 of the target figure of £1,000 had been reached.

It was subsequently reported that the day had raised £40.

Note: The Hall-Wood trio were a well known local band that played a number of gigs in the Institute during and immediately after the war. They comprised: Eric Hall (piano), Jim Greenwood (piano accordion) and Keith Bunnnett (drums).

Performance of Haydn's "Creation" at St. Andrew's Church – October 21st 1945

Very soon after the launch of the fund, the Moorland Philharmonic Society of Haworth agreed to perform, without charge, a substantial piece of choral music. On September 22nd it was announced that a performance of Haydn's oratorio "Creation" would take place, on October 21st, at St. Andrew's Church.

The event was reported in the Keighley News:

“Welcome Home” Innovation

Under the auspices of the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund, the Moorland Philharmonic Society (Haworth) rendered Haydn’s “Creation” in Kildwick Church on Sunday before large congregations totalling over 800.

The work was given under the direction of Mr. J. Rushworth Wildman with an orchestra of over 20, with Miss Beatrice Stubbs as leader and Mr. Alan McBride as pianist. This was probably the first occasion on which a musical work has been given in this church with an orchestra providing the accompaniments.

The principals were Mme. Nellie Robertshaw (soprano), Mr. Tom Langhorne (tenor) and Mr. Herbert Hornby (bass). The services were conducted by the Rev. A.T. Walkden (vicar) and the effort realised a large sum for the Welcome Home Fund.

“Creation”, a substantial piece of music, was performed in two separate church services. Part 1 and the first section of Part II in the afternoon; with the rest of the piece being performed in the evening. This split performance enabled two collections to be taken.

[Click here](#) to see the programme for this event.

Kildwick Race Meeting – August 24th 1946

As 1946 progressed, with the fund still well short of its target, the initial enthusiasm for the committee’s activities subsided and the charitable activities of the villages returned to their pre-war concerns. In response, the committee decided to complete the fund-raising with a single major event.

As was reported in the Keighley News:

A Final Effort

Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Committee, which is £130 short of the £1000 required to give every returned Service man and woman £10 each, have arranged a “winding up” event to be held today in a field loaned by Mr. Harry Clarkson near Kildwick Station.

It is to be a trotting and galloping meeting, and Mr. Claud Lister, who has been spending all his spare time making arrangements, has secured over 80 entries, among them Gala Queen, one of the best trotters in England. Local ex-Servicemen will act as stewards.

The committee have already presented £10 each to Service people who returned by a certain date [the First Distribution took place on April 27th 1946, see below], and to relatives of those who lost their lives, and it was the first fund in Craven to do this.

Interest in today’s race meeting is so great that given good weather there is no doubt that the £130 required to wind up the fund will easily be made.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME PRICE 1/-.

KILDWICK & FARNHILL HORSE & PONY RACES

In Aid of Kildwick & Farnhill Welcome Home Fund.
(Registered under War Charities Act, 1940).

In Field Adjoining Kildwick Station,
(By Kind Permission of Mr. H. Clarkson)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24th, 1946.

FIRST RACE
2-30 p.m.

• **£140** **IN**
PRIZES.

President—Ft. Lt. W. E. BENNETT.
Hon. Secretary—Mr. C. Lister. **Hon. Treasurer**—Mr. H. Kitson.
Hon. Vet.—Mr. V. J. S. Leslie, M.R.C.V.S. **Hon. Medical Officer**—Dr. A. Barr.
Trot Handicapper—Mr. G. Garnett. **Starter**—Mr. L. Throup.
Gallop Handicappers—Mr. P. McGrann and Mr. J. Ward.
Clerk of Course—Mr. W. Clough. **Judges**—Messrs. H. Raw and J. Walker.
Stewards—Kildwick & Farnhill Ex-Service Men.
Official Programme Sellers—Ladies of the Committee.
Whipper-in Mr. C. Smith.

RACING RULES.

(No First past the Post Betting Allowed).

1. All Horses will be numbered as Race Card.
2. All Riders must wear Colours.
3. Horses' Names and Numbers will appear on the Number Board.
4. No Rider to cross another unless Two clear lengths ahead.
5. Winners of Heats and Second to run off in Final.
6. Foul riding will be disqualified.
7. Sulkies in Trotting Events must leave a space of 4 feet from inner fence.
8. All Horses must parade in Saddling Enclosure 10 minutes before Races, with Attendant leading Horse.
9. Results will be shown by hoisting of White Flag on Number Board. Red Flag denotes objection Green Flag for objection upheld.
10. Only Officials, Owners and Riders allowed in Horse Paddocks.
11. Any Objection made, £1 to be lodged with same. Money returned if Objection upheld.
12. The Promoters reserve the right of admission.
13. No persons must enter Field in Horse Boxes. Only Driver allowed.
14. All disputes will be settled by the Clerk of the Course.
15. No Rider allowed to use whip, stick or cane exceeding 27 inches.
16. Minimum weight in Open Gallop 8 stone 7 lbs.
17. Riders must weigh in before and after Race.
18. The Handicappers reserve the Right to Re-Handicap.
19. If only Three Runners in One Race, Prize Money will be Reduced 25%. If less than Three Runners Prize Money will be Reduced 50%.
20. Competitors giving False Information on Entrance Forms lose all rights to Prize Money.
21. **METHOD OF STARTING**—The Gun will be Fired Immediately after the Loud Speaker has Counted Ten.
22. Any Rider over-running mark will be pulled back 10 yards.

GENERAL RULES.

1. Persons entering the field do so at their own risk.
2. The promoters reserve the right of admission to the field.
3. The promoters will not be held responsible for any kind of accident to persons, property or animals.
4. Prize Winners to collect their Prizes from the Secretary's Tent at Close of Races.

SAFETY FIRST.

All persons, particularly children, must keep clear of the track.

Figure 1: Programme for the Kildwick Races (front page)

There were a total of 13 races:

- Handicap for children under 14 years, ponies under 12 hands
- Flat race for children under 16, ponies under 14 hands
- 1¼ mile trotting race
- Open gallop, 1¼ mile, horses over 14.2 hands – two heats plus a final
- Open gallop, ponies under 14.2 hands
- Open handicap trotting race, 1¼ mile – three heats plus a final
- Open gallop for horses never having won a race
- Scamper race

This event must have represented something of a gamble for the fund: prize-money of £140 was on offer and, as the Keighley News report (above) made clear, the anticipated success of the event depended upon good weather on the day.

In fact, August 24th was the start of a prolonged period of heavy rain which caused extensive flooding in the Aire and Worth valleys. As the Keighley News reported, the event went ahead in appalling weather:

Trotting at Kildwick

“Welcome Home” Events

The popularity of the village type of horse racing and trotting was demonstrated to a marked degree on Saturday, when a good crowd defied torrential rain to see through some exciting sport at Kildwick. The races were a “winding up” event of the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home committee held with the objective of raising £130 and attaining the £1,000 mark, which will enable them to give each returning Service man or woman £10 each. The committee has already presented this sum to a number of Service people, and to relatives of those who lost their lives, and was the first fund in Craven to do this.

£140 in prizes

The event took place in an ideally suitable field, loaned by Mr. Harry Clarkson, near Kildwick Station. Given even reasonable weather conditions it must have proved a great financial success. As it is, the committee will probably attain their objective in spite of being at a good deal of expense in offering £140 in prizes, although this sum would largely be covered by the fine entry of 80, due to the efforts of Mr. Claud Lister, the hon. secretary.

The weather was dull throughout, with heavy showers, but in spite of this the event was a great success. With no shelter from the rain the crowd and bookmakers refused to be intimidated and most of the spectators stayed until the last race, many of them soaked to the skin, on a ground that became waterlogged and made the going very heavy in the closing stages. Even under these conditions only two of the horses slipped and the riders received no more than a shaking and a coating of mud.

Starter's mishap

It was a disappointment that "Gala Queen", one of the best trotters in England, did not run. She was there but the owners objected to the handicapping and withdraw her. Both the galloping and trotting produced exciting finishes. No sulkies were used in the latter, presumably because of the heavy going. Of course there were objections, and the final race was only started at the third attempt. First one of the riders set off before the gun and there were howls of objection. The horses were brought back to their marks, and then the starter (Mr. L. Throup) who was standing on the roof of a building, slipped and accidentally discharged his gun before the competitors were ready.

Kildwick and Farnhill ex-Service men acted as stewards.

[Click here](#) to see the full programme for this event.

Smaller fund raising efforts

Following the privations of the war, the two villages seemed to enjoy themselves raising money for the fund, and there are reports in the local newspapers of many small-scale or individual fund raising efforts.

In particular, the children of the village got involved.

- *Six school-children: Colin Walmsley, Jack Parker, Geoffrey Allen, Max Parker, Norman Jennings, Leslie Allen and Jill Walmsley have been going round Farnhill with a comic horse and have this week raised £1 5s for the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund. [A similar "beast" was seen in the village in August, during the VJ Day celebrations; this second time raising a further £1 10s.]*
- *Lavender bags made by Blanche Dickson and Nita Lister have raised £1 5s 3d.*
- *Coppers collected by Kildwick Wolf Cubs amount to £1.*
- *The Kildwick Church Brotherhood - £1 1s.*

Distribution of funds

On April 27th 1946, with the fund still £150 short of its target, the committee held the first of two events at which a cheque for £10 was presented to each of those who had been “demobbed”, and also to the families of those who had died on active service.

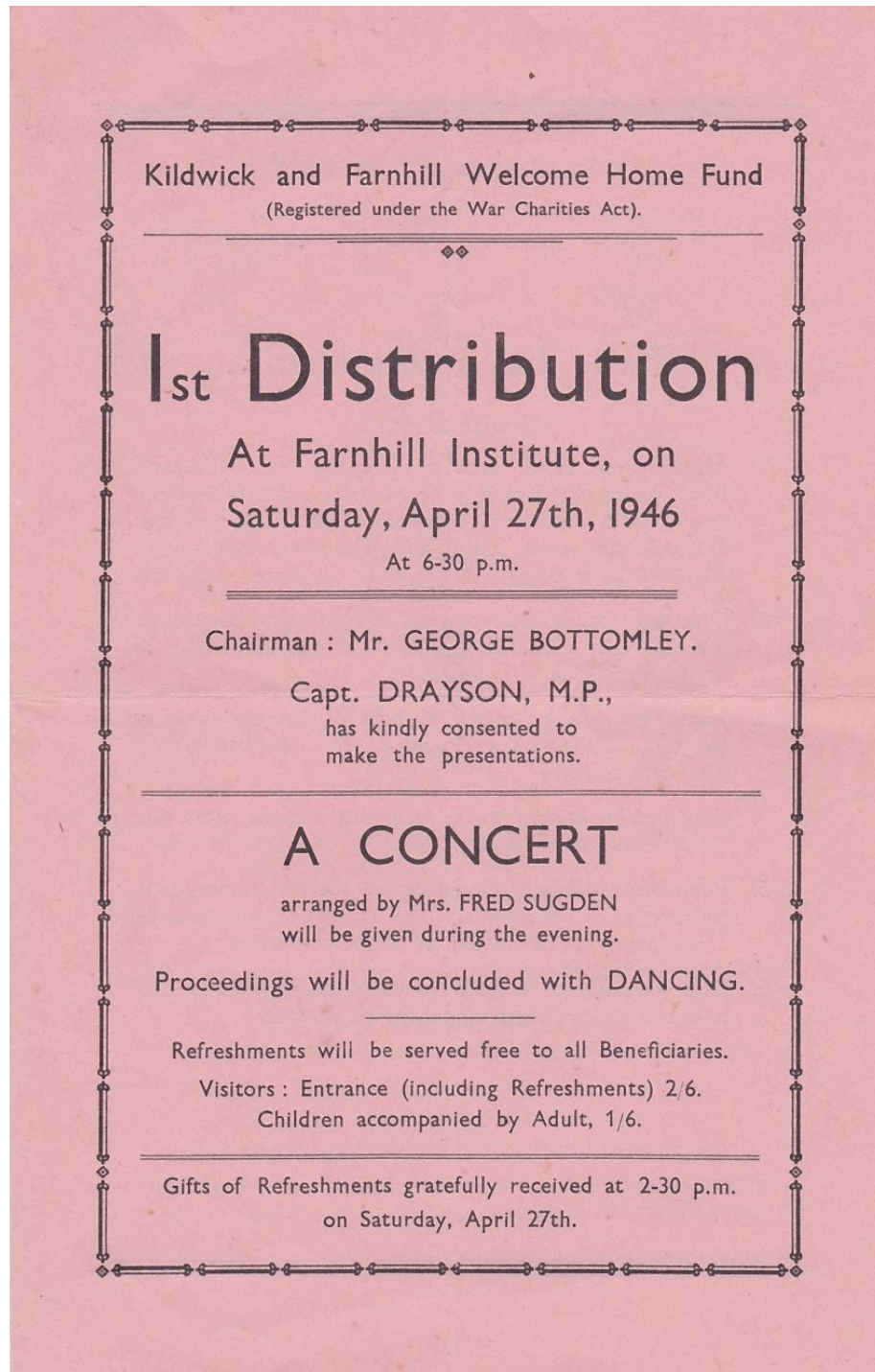


Figure 2: Programme for the first distribution from the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund

The list of beneficiaries probably forms a definitive list of all those who were called-up from Kildwick and Farnhill during WWII.

List of Beneficiaries :		
W. Allen	J. Heaton	K. Simpson
R. Armistead (A.T.S.)	E. Hicks	Percy Slater
C. D. H. Bartlett	M. Hill	A. Smith
R. Baxter	T. Hodgson	J. N. Smith
M. Beedom	Leslie Holmes	Richard Smith
K. Bell (W.A.A.F.)	A. Horner	Stanley Smith
W. E. Bennett	J. Hutchinson	R. Stephenson
J. Blakesley	J. Jones	H. Sugden
H. Blakesley	Clifford Kitson	D. Sugden
L. Blakesley	Chas. Kitson	E. L. Taylor
R. Blakesley	J. Kitson	A. Thompson
T. Blakesley	S. Kirk	J. Tillotson
H. Boothman	D. Lister	S. Tillotson
J. Bracken	A. Lofthouse	E. Tidswell
F. Butterfield	A. Lofthouse (A.T.S.)	R. Walkden
J. Carter	H. Longmoore	G. Walker
J. Clarkson	L. Lonsdale	A. Walmsley
G. M. Condon (Q.A.I.N.S.)	R. Lonsdale	W. H. Wass
G. Croft	C. Loughenbury	H. Ward
H. Crossley	C. Moore	N. Ward
H. Critchley	L. Moore	D. Ward (A.T.S.)
F. Earnshaw	W. Moore	G. Waterhouse
G. W. Fletcher	W. Marklew	C. E. Whiteoak
D. Foster	B. Overend	J. Whitaker
A. Gill	B. Parker	R. Wilson
H. Greenwood	H. Pollard	F. Windle
C. Happs	W. Rishworth	J. Windle
D. Hargreaves	D. Robinson (A.T.S.)	H. Whittaker
A. O. Hartley	G. Sharpe	M. E. Zillessen
J. Hayton	K. H. Sharpe	T. Zillessen
K. Haworth	L. C. Sharpe	
Payments will be made to the next of kin of those who gave their lives for this country:—		
G. Teal	W. Bracken	E. Holmes
J. Bancroft	W. H. Emmott	T. Gill
E. Bracken	W. H. Zillessen	

Figure 3: List of beneficiaries from the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund.

The event was reported in the Craven Herald:

"Welcome Home" Cheques of £10

Memorable Kildwick and Farnhill Ceremony

Fifty-three returned Servicemen and women of Farnhill, at a public gathering on Saturday evening, received at the hands of Mr. G. H. Drayson, Skipton's M.P., who also served in the Royal Artillery throughout the war, an envelope containing a cheque for £10, and an illuminated card with the following inscription:

*"In recognition of the devoted service you rendered to your country during the war 1939-45.
May you live long to enjoy the fruits of victory."*

The gifts were possible through the generosity of the people of Kildwick and Farnhill in building-up a Welcome Home Fund. Last year, on May 10, a meeting of representatives of various organisations of the two villages was arranged by the Farnhill Parish Council and the Kildwick Parish Meeting to discuss the inauguration of a "Welcome Home" Fund. Officials were appointed and, at a later date, a "target" figure of £1,000 was agreed upon. Towards this £850 has already been raised. ...

Mr. George Bottomley presided over the gathering and supporting him on the platform were: the Rev. J. Knight Calvert (Chairman of the Welcome Home Fund committee), Mr. E. Zillessen (Secretary), Mr. H. Kitson (Treasurer) and Mr. and Mrs. Drayson.

Mr. Bottomley described the gathering as a memorable one for the district, for not only was it the first public presentation of its kind in the Craven area, but it gave them the opportunity of meeting the Service men and women who had given so much in the country's interests. Some of the Servicemen they would never meet again, but they thought of them with pride and affection: they knew they had done their duty and that their work was finished. The two villages answered the call nobly, and out of a population of 680 over 100 joined the Services ...

An example of the presentation cards distributed at this event is shown below.



Figure 4: An example of the Welcome Home Fund's commemoration card – this one presented to the late Arthur Lofthouse

A second distribution event took place in March 1947.

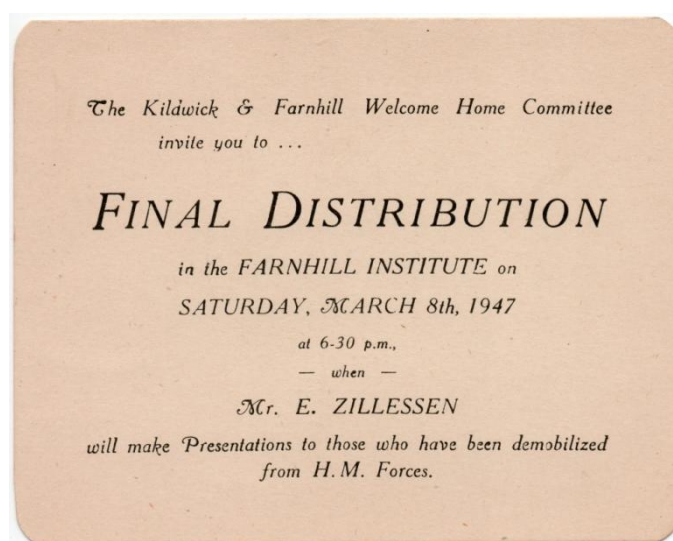


Figure 5: Invitation card for the Kildwick and Farnhill Welcome Home Fund "Final Distribution"

This event was also reported by the Craven Herald:

FARNHILL

"Welcome Home" Gifts – The second distribution of gifts in connection with the Kildwick and Farnhill "Welcome Home" scheme was made at a gathering in Farnhill Methodist School on Saturday. The first distribution was made on April 27, 1946, when 55 ex-servicemen and women received their gifts. The fund commenced in the previous May and the "target" figure of £1000 was realised in less than 16 months. On Saturday each of 27 ex-service personnel received an envelope containing a cheque for £10 ...

The Rev. J. Knight Calvert, chairman of the "Welcome Home" committee presided and supporting him on the platform were Mr. E. Zillessen (secretary) and Mr. H. Kitson (treasurer) ...

Mr. E. Zillessen then presented the cheques, shaking hands with and speaking to each recipient. He said that he was very gratified at being asked to make the presentations. It had been a labour of love in raising the money for the fund and he was indebted to the officials and members of the committee for their splendid efforts ...

No further public presentation of gifts will be made. Demobilised service men and women who have not yet had their gifts and those still serving with the Forces will receive them privately.

References

Newspaper reports of events came from the Keighley News and Craven Herald for the period May 1945 to March 1947

- 1 Letter from Revd. Reginald Hodgkinson (Minister) to Harry Crossley (Organist), Easter 1943.
- 2 <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/inflation/calculator/index1.aspx>

Acknowledgements

The documents shown in Figures 1–4 were loaned by John Lofthouse. Additional information and the invitation card shown in Figure 5 was provided by Helen Moran, who also helped with the research.