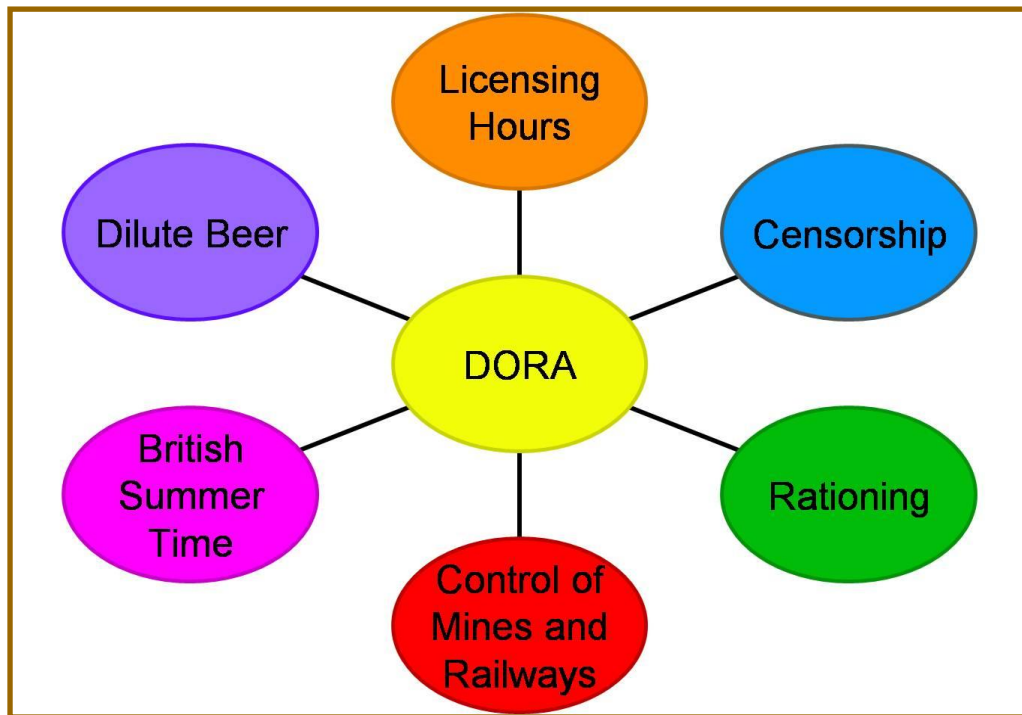
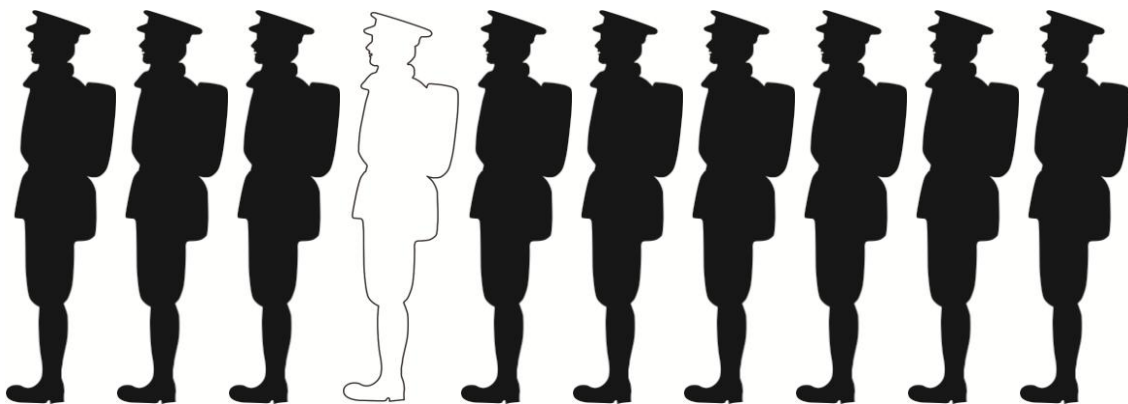


The Great War
Our Community Commemorated

Rules and Regulations



Booklet 9: Lynda Kappes MBE



Holmes Chapel and District U3A Local History Group

This booklet, ninth in a series about the effect of the First World War on Holmes Chapel, describes the impact of the rules and regulations enforced through the Defence of the Realm Act even in small communities like Holmes Chapel.

Ref: The poster on the cover was issued by the government under the Defence of the Realm Act 1914.

Rules and Regulations During The Great War

The Defence of the Realm Act was introduced by the House of Commons without debate on August 8th 1914. It gave the government powers to control many aspects of people's daily lives. The legislation gave the government executive powers to suppress published criticism, imprison without trial and commandeer economic resources for the war effort. It was a move away from the "business as usual" attitude under Prime Minister Asquith towards a state of total war under David Lloyd George the first time this had been seen in Britain.

DORA brought about the most important changes in Britain's history for a short while. When war broke out in 1914 it was a very different war from the more recent conflicts such as the Boer war in South Africa. In 1914 Britain was concerned with two main issues;

1. Defending the country from possible internal enemies and spies
2. Mobilising the country behind the war effort

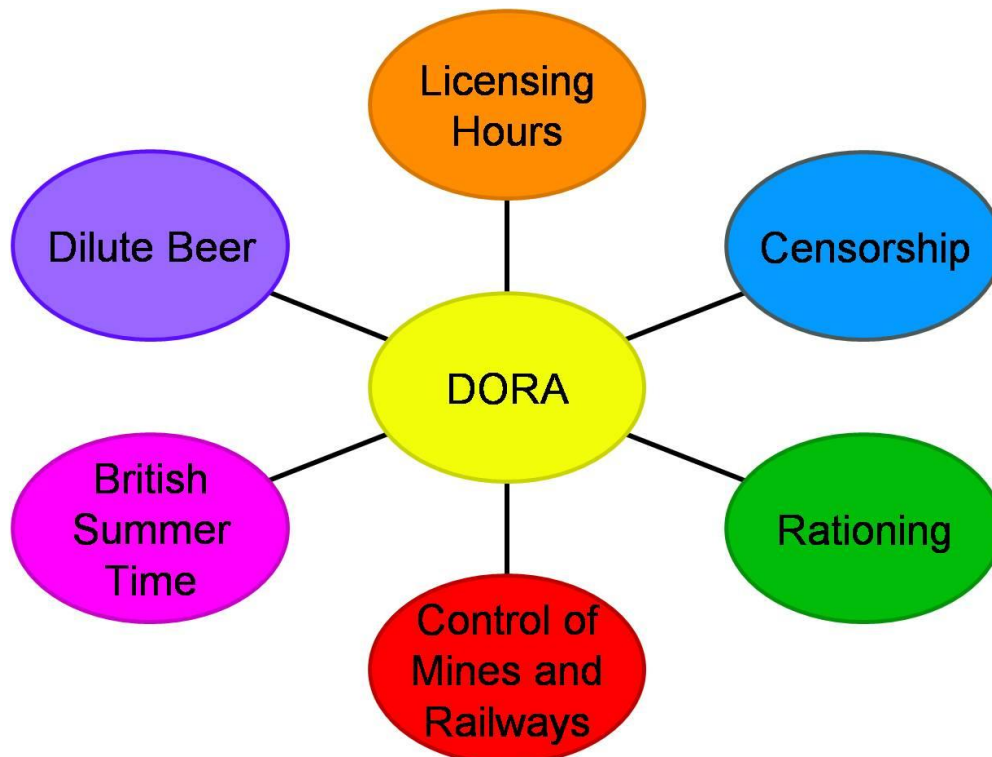
One of its priorities was to keep industrial production high but other things were affected too. Its main objectives were:

- To prevent spying on British military and naval operations.
- To protect Britain from the threat of foreign invasion.
- To increase production of weapons and war materials.
- To ensure there was a sufficient amount of food for the British population.

DEFENCE OF THE REALM. E.P. 8.			
MINISTRY OF FOOD.			
BREACHES OF THE RATIONING ORDER			
The undermentioned convictions have been recently obtained:—			
Court	Date	Nature of Offence	Result
HENDON - -	29th Aug., 1918	Unlawfully obtaining and using ration books -	3 Months' Imprisonment
WEST HAM -	29th Aug., 1918	Being a retailer & failing to detach proper number of coupons	Fined £20
SMETHWICK -	22nd July, 1918	Obtaining meat in excess quantities - - -	Fined £50 & £5 5s. costs
OLD STREET -	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer selling to unregistered customer	Fined £72 & £5 5s. costs
OLD STREET -	4th Sept., 1918	Not detaching sufficient coupons for meat sold -	Fined £25 & £2 2s. costs
CHESTER-LE-STREET	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer returning number of registered customers in excess of counterfoils deposited - - -	Fined £50 & £3 3s. costs
HIGH WYCOMBE	7th Sept., 1918	Making false statement on application for and using Ration Books unlawfully - - -	Fined £40 & £6 4s. costs

Enforcement Branch, Local Authorities Division,
MINISTRY OF FOOD. September, 1918.

The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) governed all aspects of the lives of citizens in Britain during World War One.



DORA was added to as the war progressed and it listed everything people were not allowed to do during the war. As the war evolved so DORA evolved. The Act was extended three times during the conflict.

The Defence of the Realm Act gave the government overarching powers to introduce whatever measure it deemed necessary to conduct the war effort.

DORA enabled the government to commandeer economic resources for the war effort, imprison without trial, censor the printed and spoken word and greatly control the lives of the people of Britain.

When it was first introduced in August 1914 the following laws were put in place:

- No-one was allowed to talk about naval or military matters in public places



- No-one was allowed to spread rumours about military matters
- No-one was allowed to buy binoculars

- No-one was allowed to trespass on railway lines or bridges
- No-one was allowed to melt down gold or silver
- No-one was allowed to light bonfires or fireworks
- No-one was allowed to fly kites
- No-one was allowed to feed wild animals
- No-one was allowed to give bread to horses or chickens
- No-one was allowed to use invisible ink when writing abroad
- No-one was allowed to buy whisky or brandy in a railway refreshment room
- No-one was allowed to ring church bells
- The government could take over any factory or workshop
- The government could take over any land it wanted to
- The government could censor newspapers
- Customers in public houses were not allowed to buy a round of drinks for other people
- Shops had to close at 8pm
- All lights visible from the outside of any house should be extinguished or obscured within the specified hours
- Motor vehicles must not use powerful lamps

POLICE NOTICE

AS TO LIGHTS IN LONDON.

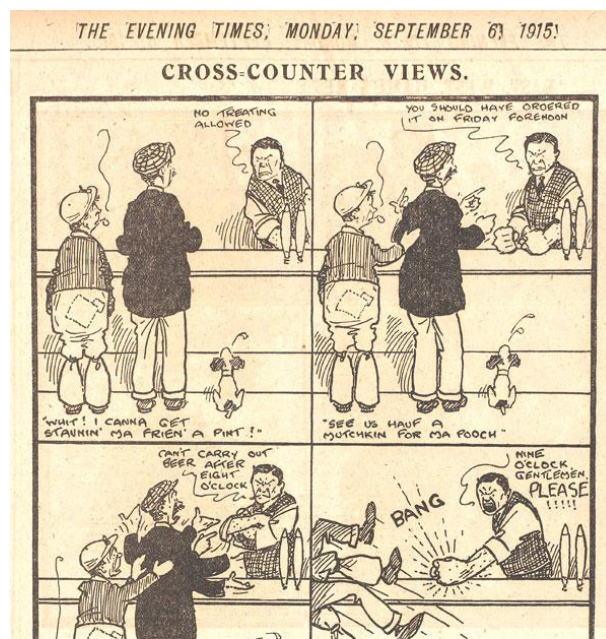
The Secretary of State for the Home Department, under the powers conferred on him by Regulation 11 of the Defence of the Realm (Consolidation) Regulations, 1914, has made an Order which contains the undermentioned provisions:—

In all brightly lighted streets and squares and on bridges a portion of the lights must be extinguished so as to break up all conspicuous groups or rows of lights: and the lights which are not so extinguished must be lowered or made invisible from above by shading them or by painting over the tops and upper portions of the globes: provided that while thick fog prevails the normal lighting of the streets may be resumed.

Sky signs, illuminated fascias, illuminated lettering and lights of all descriptions used for outside advertising or for the illumination of shop fronts must be extinguished.

The government could take to court any civilian breaking these laws
Also affected were:

1. Licensing hours - these were introduced by DORA, public houses were only open for 2 hours at lunchtime and 3 hours in the evening. This made sure the workforce was awake and sober for factory work.
2. The strength of beer – this was diluted, the government allowed publicans to make beer weaker. This ensured the workforce didn't drink so much as to make them drunk or hung over while at work.

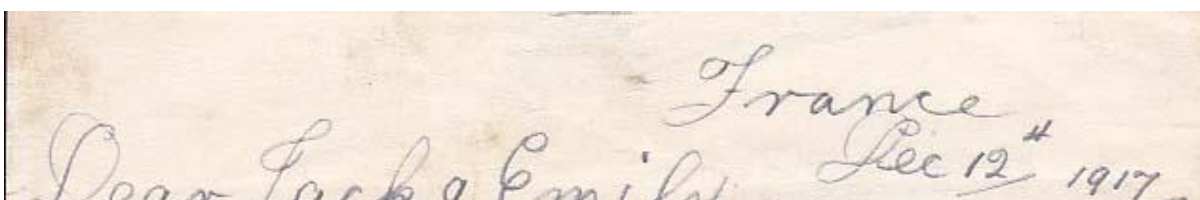


Cartoon Lampooning the New Licensing Laws

3. British Summer Time – this was introduced, the government moved the clocks forward by an hour in the summer. This ensured factories had maximum daylight meaning they could operate later in the day.

During the war publishing information that was calculated to be indirectly or directly of use to the enemy became an offence and accordingly punishable in a court of law. This included any description of the war and any news that was likely to cause conflict between the public and military authorities.

In August 1914 the British Government established the War Office Press Bureau. The idea was that this organisation would censor news and telegraphic reports from the British Army and then issue it to the press. Lord Kitchener decided to appoint Colonel Ernest Swinton to become the British Army's official journalist on the Western Front. Swinton's reports were first censored at GHQ in France and then personally vetted by Kitchener before being released to the press. Letters written by members of the Armed Forces to their friends and families were also read and censored by the military authorities.



WW1 Censored Letter

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

I am quite well.

*I have been admitted into hospital
{ ~~sick~~ } and am going on well.
{ ~~wounded~~ } and hope to be discharged soon.*

I am being sent down to the base.

*I have received your { letter dated _____
telegram,, _____
parcel,, _____*

Letter follows at first opportunity.

*I have received no letter from you
{ lately.
for a long time.*

**Signature
only.**

F. J. Powell

Date March 22/16

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]

WW1 Censored Letter

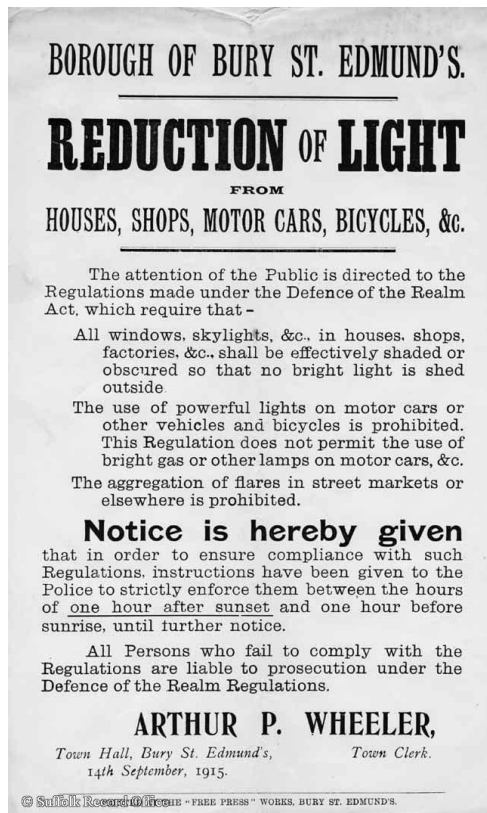
Anyone breaching the regulations with intent to assist the enemy could be sentenced to death and by the end of the war ten people had been executed for this reason. The first person to be arrested under DORA was John Maclean, a Marxist and Clydeside revolutionary. He made statements prejudicial to recruitment and was fined £5. He refused to pay and so spent 5 nights in prison and was subsequently dismissed from his post as a teacher.

Some of the provisions under DORA may seem strange to us now but they did have a purpose. For instance flying a kite or lighting a bonfire could attract Zeppelin attacks. After rationing was introduced feeding wild animals was obviously a waste of food.

How Did This Affect Holmes Chapel?

Many local people fell foul of the DORA regulations and ended up in court and when found guilty issued with fines. The lighting laws were the ones people found most difficult to uphold.





Dr. Picton, the village GP, was fined on two occasions for not obscuring lights correctly at his home. He pleaded guilty on both instances and was fined 2s 6d for his first offence in April 1916 and 5s for the second offence in June 1916. The Principal of the Agricultural College at Saltersford Hall, John Young was also fined 2s 6d on April 28th 1916 after being warned in March of the same year for a similar offence. It was noted that after the court case a notice was put up in the College warning about keeping lights obscured effectively. On November 10th 1916 several people were fined 5s for lighting regulation breaches, including the Works Manager at the Wallpaper Works, the grocer George Craig and Agnes Leech, a farmer from Goostrey Lane, Cranage.

Lighting restrictions appertaining to motor vehicles were thought to be responsible for two car accidents in November 1916. The first accident

involved a car colliding with a horse and cart. A Mr. Stubbs was cut and bruised and the car badly damaged. The second accident was more serious. A car being driven by a woman down Cranage Bank hit Alex Hillman aged 2 years 6 months. He was run over and his leg badly crushed. Dr Picton is reported to have attended.

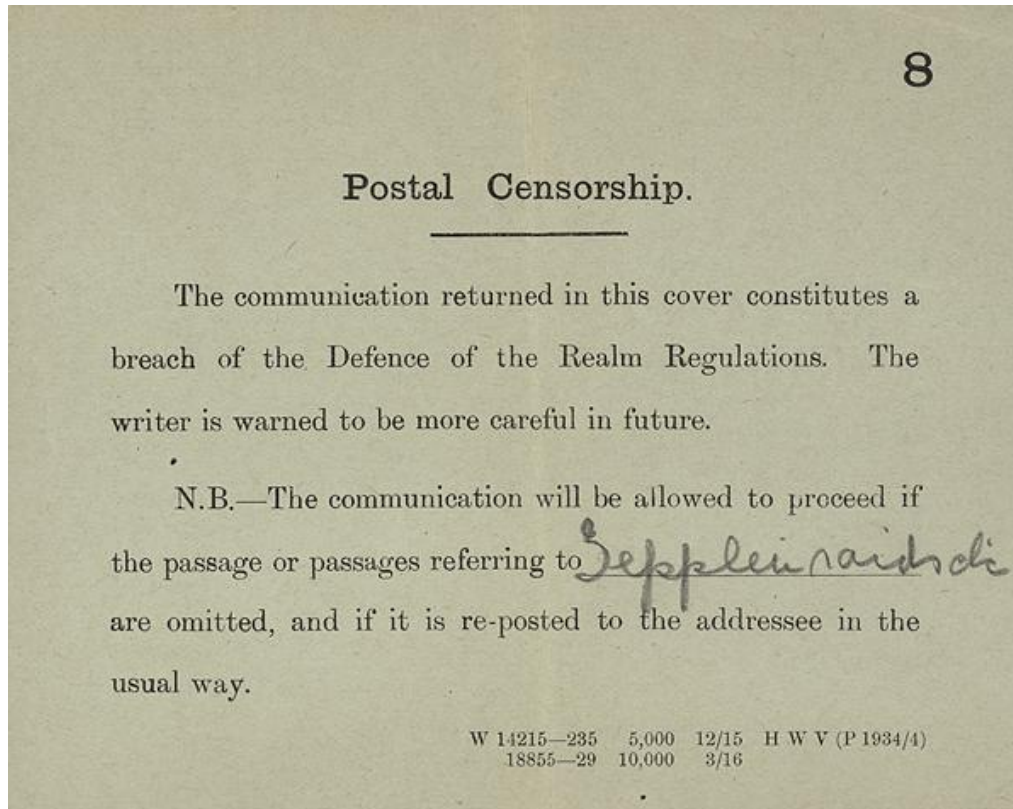
Local businesses were required to reduce their services. Holmes Chapel shopkeepers agreed a closing order on March 17th 1916. Customers were asked to do their shopping earlier, the opening hours now being until 7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; 1pm on Wednesdays; 8. 30pm on Fridays and 10pm on Saturdays.

In June 1917 postal services were cut. The afternoon delivery was cancelled although letters were still collected from boxes. A regulation that may have affected some of the social life of the village was introduced on September 1st 1916. Motor spirit was not to be used for charabancs or other like vehicles on any excursion or trip except for ambulance, naval, military or munitions purposes or if certified by the chief police officer for the area.

The new licensing and drinking regulations also led to the arrest and conviction of several people including on January 15th 1915 Robert Glover of Davenport. Mr Glover was arrested for not having proper control of a horse and cart outside the George and Dragon. He had left the horse and cart for 35 minutes whilst he went inside to “take something warm for a bad cold”. He was fined 5s (25p) and court costs. The police were trying to stop the practice of leaving horses unattended in the street for fear of them being stolen by “agents of the enemy”. On February 4th 1916 a man from Chorlton-cum-Hardy passing through Holmes Chapel on his way home was arrested for being drunk in charge of a motor car in Cranage: he was fined 10s (50p).

Most people accepted the restrictions DORA brought in. The majority of arrests or cautions given by the police or military authorities were for

people who accidentally broke DORA regulations rather than people protesting about government restrictions on their freedom. Rationing under DORA was welcomed by many as a fairer system and by 1918 the diet of many working class people had improved. Calorie intake during the war decreased by only 3% and protein intake by 6%. Civilian life expectancy actually rose during the war especially for the working class.



Censorship of the press and letters from the front meant that bad news did not reach the population at home and prevent men from joining up or their families from discouraging them. In some ways DORA is still with us in the form of the seasonal clock changes, public house licensing laws and opening hours restrictions. The Defence of the Realm Act established a control over the British people which, although relaxed in peacetime, was never to be totally removed.

Sources

Congleton "Chronicle" newspapers

Crewe "Chronicle" and "Guardian" newspapers

BBC1 "Britain's Great War" programmes

National Archive office

Wikipedia

Google images

www.historylearningsite.co.uk

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Booklets in this series produced by the Holmes Chapel U3A Local History Group:

1. Holmes Chapel before the War
2. Village People 1914 – 1918
3. The Men Who Went to War
4. Refugees come to the village
5. Beating the Drum – Recruitment and Communication
6. The Community Response
7. Feeding the People
8. Rationing During the War
9. Rules and Regulations
10. Education
11. Life Goes On
12. Holmes Chapel at the End of the War

For copies of booklets see web site
www.holmeschapelhistory.co.uk

First Published August 2014

Revised August 2018

WW1 and Holmes Chapel & District U3A

In 2011 the Holmes Chapel & District University of the Third Age (U3A) was set up in the village and one of the activities under its umbrella was a local history group. This attracted people who had been involved in research in the past as well as some new volunteers eager to learn more. After an initial period of encouragement and training for the newcomers it was decided that the group would work together on a topic - The Story of Holmes Chapel and district during the First World War.

This is one in a series of booklets describing different aspects of life in Holmes Chapel and district before and during the First World War. A full list of the booklets is given on the inside of this back cover.

Research Group Members: Bill Barber, Cath Cameron, Rod Cameron, John Clowes, Peter Cotton, John Cowburn, Stella Freer, Gwen Hayhurst, Barbara Jackson, Lynda Kappes, Val White, Janet Yarwood.



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