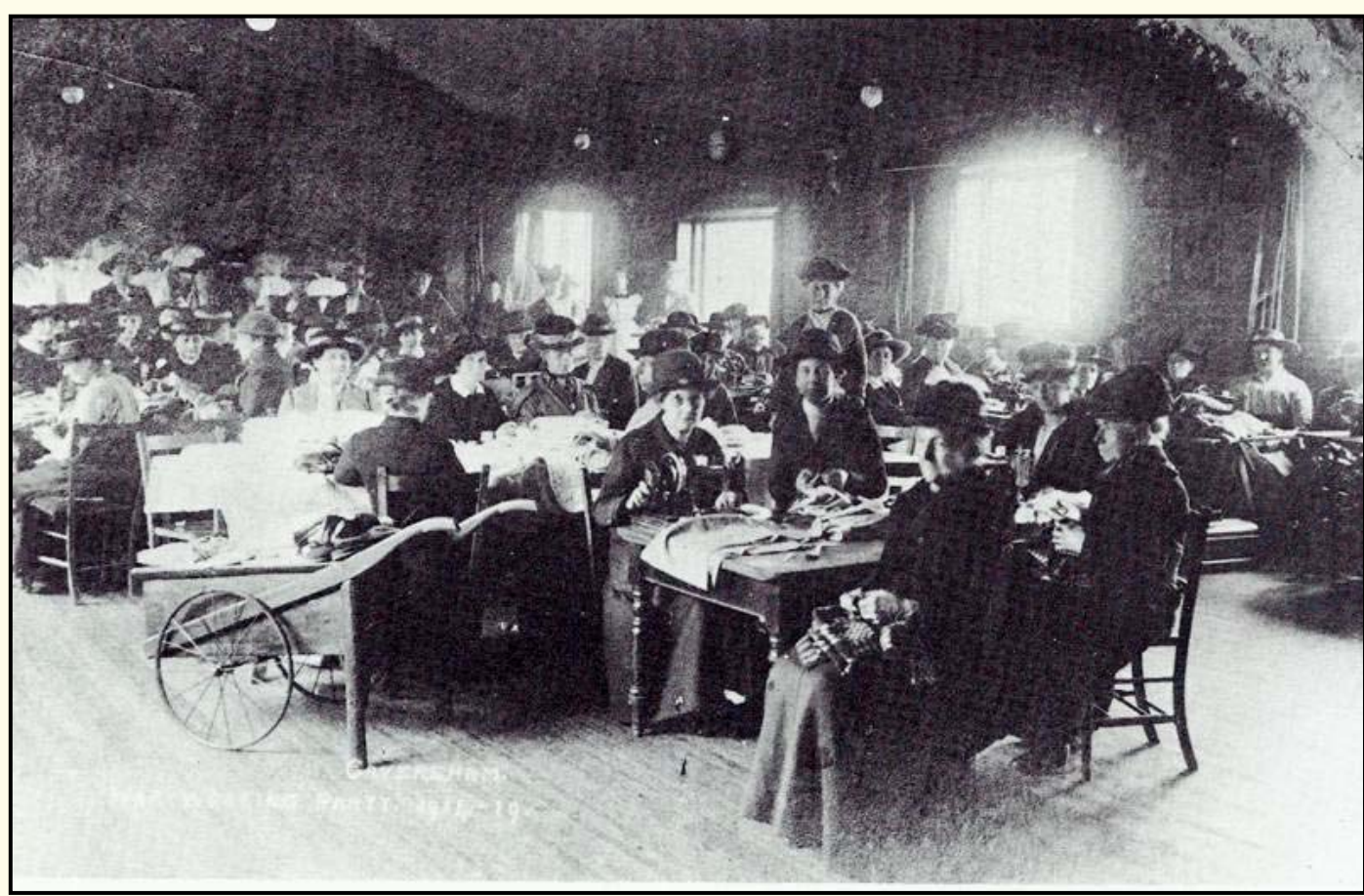


# Caversham in WW1

## The Home Front

### The War Effort

Local people joined together to support the war effort and to keep things going on the home front. Women took on new roles, doing jobs previously done by the men fighting in France and Belgium, as well providing traditional support.



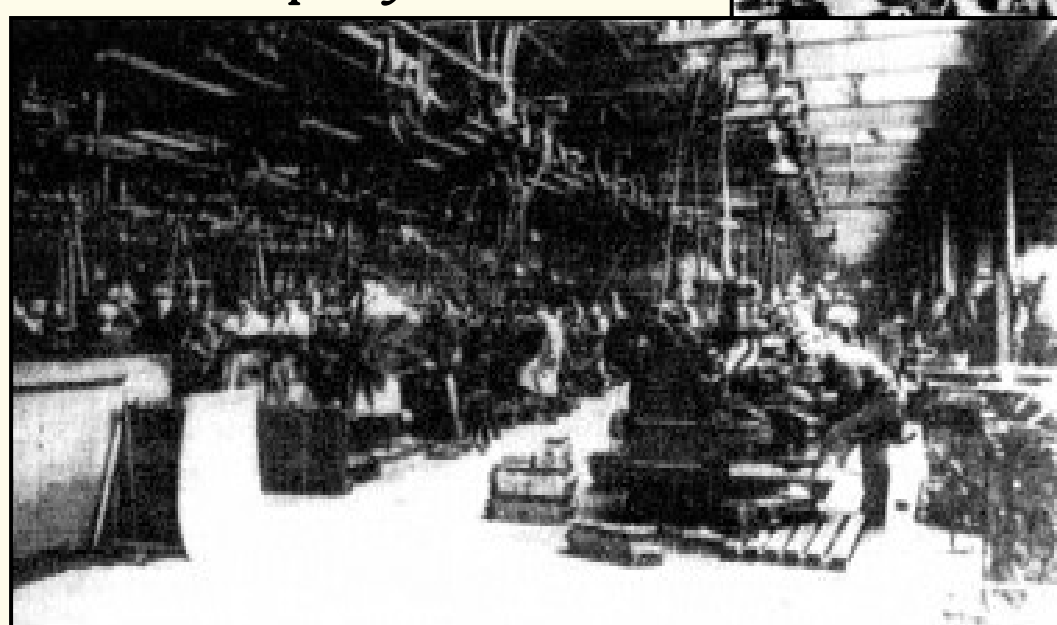
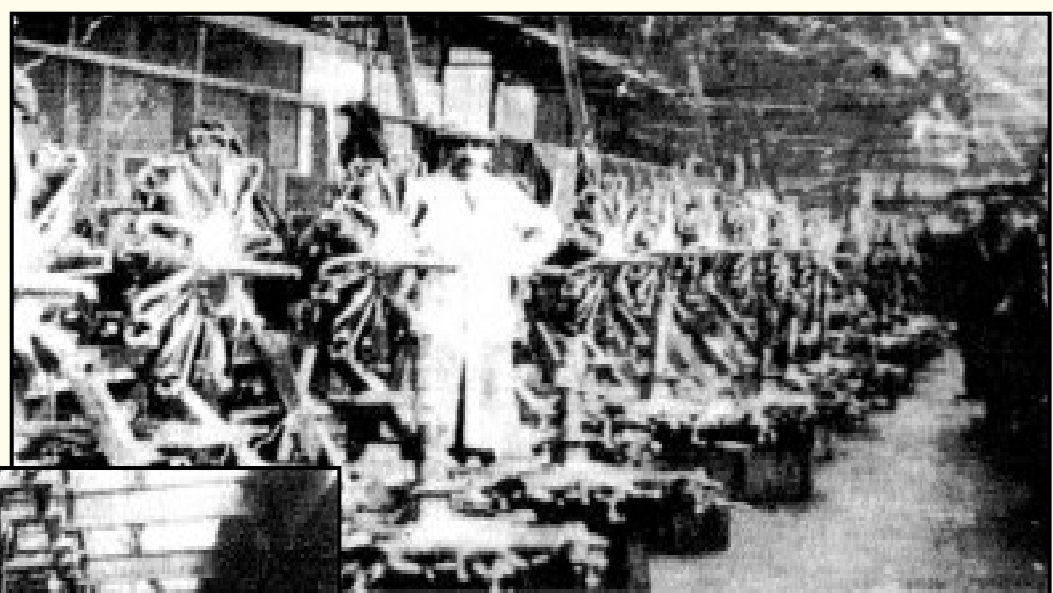
Pictured here is a working party of ladies sewing and knitting at Balmore Hall, Hemdean Road (now the site of Balmore Surgery).

In Reading, the first post women (below) took up their bags in 1915. Deliveries were cut to three a day from the pre-war five. The first women police (right) were appointed in 1917, though they had no powers of arrest.



### Local Industry

In 1916, the Herbert Engineering Company on Wolsey Road, Caversham won a contract to repair Le Rhône & Clergot rotary engines which were used in Sopworth Camel and Sopworth Pup fighter biplanes. The factory worked both day and night and at one time 700 men were employed.



### Care for the wounded

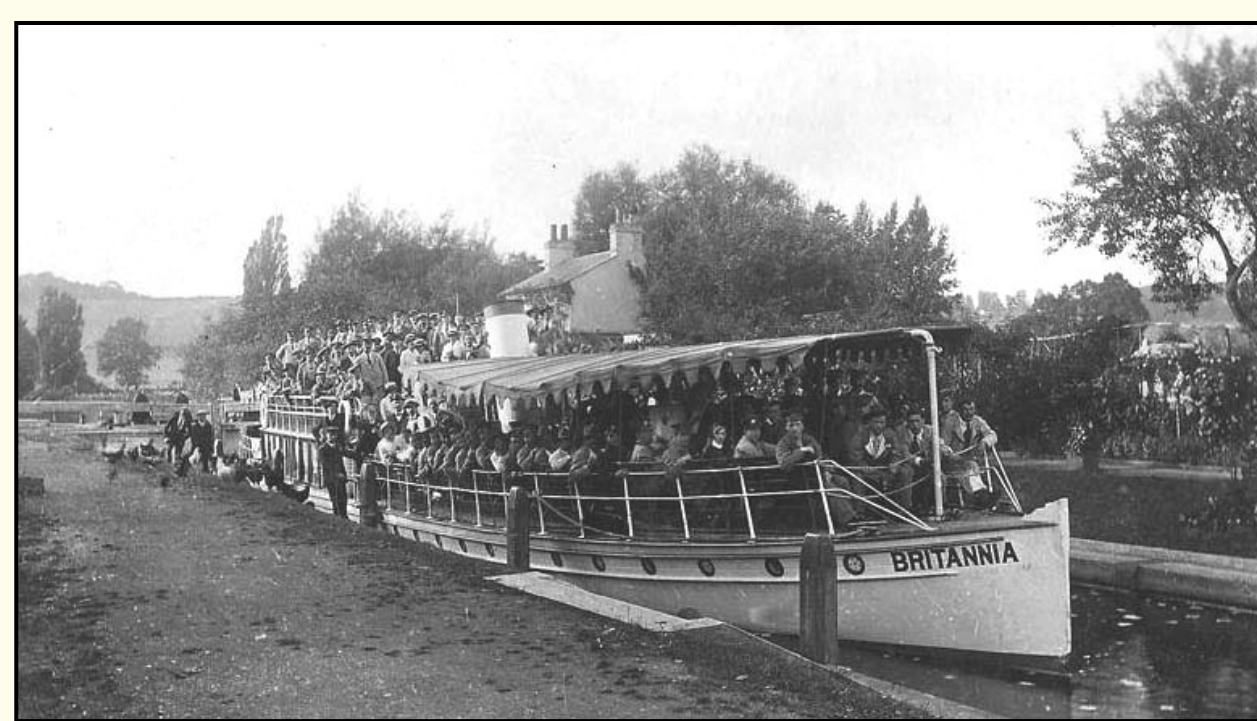
Streams of ambulances brought wounded patients to Battle Hospital in Reading and by the end of the war over 39,000 patients were received there. The owners of large houses and businesses offered support where they could.



*Nurses and patients outside Caversham Park.*

Mrs Crawshay at Caversham Park was the Commandant of the St Anne's Hall Auxiliary War Hospital at Caversham, working as full time organiser and nurse as well as paying all the running costs. She was awarded the OBE in 1918.

Boat trips for the wounded, setting out from below Caversham Bridge, were sponsored by local families and businesses. In



July 1918 the family of JH Baylis (high class grocer in Church Street - now The Spice Oven) went with a party of 125 men from hospital casualty units on Maynard's

Britannia. Musical entertainment was by the Merry Monarchs, (six soldiers from another hospital), and by ladies playing harp, violin and piano. Tea was taken at the home of Mrs Noble at Park Place Henley.

Lady Elizabeth Mosley, wife of Sir Oswald Mosley, lived at Caversham Court from the early 20th century to the end of the First World War. She was actively involved with Reading Philanthropic Society, pictured here at Caversham Court.



Bill Moss, a former Methodist preacher, boatman, angler and water bailiff was a very popular performer. In his retirement he entertained the war wounded, often going with them on boat trips combined with tea at one of the big riverside houses. He had a large repertoire of comic songs, singing more than 500 of them in 1917 - always with his hat and cane! He died in January 1918, singing until just a few days before his death.

