

The History of Tewkesbury's War Hospitals 1914-1918. "Alien Duties for the Privileged?", by John Dixon, with research assisted by Linda Kean-Price, published by Tewkesbury Historical Society, 2019. 164pp. £17, available from Alison's Bookshop, High Street, Tewkesbury or www.tewkesburyhistory.org.

I was especially pleased to be asked to review this book as I have long held an interest in Gloucestershire's VAD Hospitals. Assuming that a significant portion of the book would refer to convalescent soldiers, I was delighted that the book concentrates on the significant contribution made by the individuals who provided the much needed care and support. Their contribution during the time that the hospitals were operational is very well documented and it is especially significant that the research follows the lives of individuals and how their experiences during the time of war affected their lives following the closure of the hospitals.

Social status is not a determining factor as to the effort made to paint a picture of the person involved, and I would highlight just two individuals as examples of the detail researched which, without doubt, demonstrates that staff came from all walks of life. Miss Helen Gordon-Duff, born in Westminster in 1897, was the eldest daughter of Lady Frances Fortescue and Archibald Hay Gordon-Duff, an Eton-educated Land Agent and Director of Life Insurance and Tea Companies. Helen was a nurse who worked full-time at Mitton from July 1918 to March 1919. After the war she travelled to India and Australia and for many years lived in Kensington. Mrs Annie Gough came from more humble beginnings. She was the daughter of a plumber and decorator, marrying Henry Gough at Charlton Kings in 1903. Throughout the war she served as a cook, serving a total of 3379 hours. Her husband was also active in the community, including a role as a special constable.

The comprehensive research carried out for this book is impressive and especially worthy of note. I particularly like the fact that it is well illustrated and has a thoroughly helpful index. To anyone with an interest in the contribution of communities during WW1, I would wholeheartedly recommend this book, which comprehensively covers the efforts made by both men and women in ensuring the high standards set in Tewkesbury's War Hospitals during the war years.

Geoffrey A. North