

Craic

**Our second issue
Commemorating
World War I**

**The Magazine
for
Great Salkeld
& area**

**Issue 14
Summer 2014**

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As previously stated in my Spring Editorial, the Great War was not just a land battle, but one which now embroiled the fledgling Royal Flying Corp. In this issue, we cover part of its evolution by a village member whose relative was actively involved in that theatre.

But to continue with life on the home front, the requirement for production of munitions involved the establishment of a complete town on the Cumbrian borders, to produce an explosive material called Devils Porridge.

The extracts of letters, that we published in the last issue, reflected the trauma that was being endured by those on the front, and with mounting casualties on a daily basis, some were fortunate to escape this carnage and were shipped back home to be nursed by the Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service.

Due to blockade of our merchant shipping by the enemy, there was a big loss of food that was being imported. As a result, farmers were urged to produce more to fill this gap.

The massive farms in Great Salkeld covered many acres, and were worked by men, and boys, and a great deal of women. What has happened to those farms is included in the piece by Jack Downie.

I trust the overviews we are reporting will continue to be of interest, and thank those who are making these written contributions.

Enjoy your summer.

Frank Hope, Editor

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### CONTRIBUTIONS:

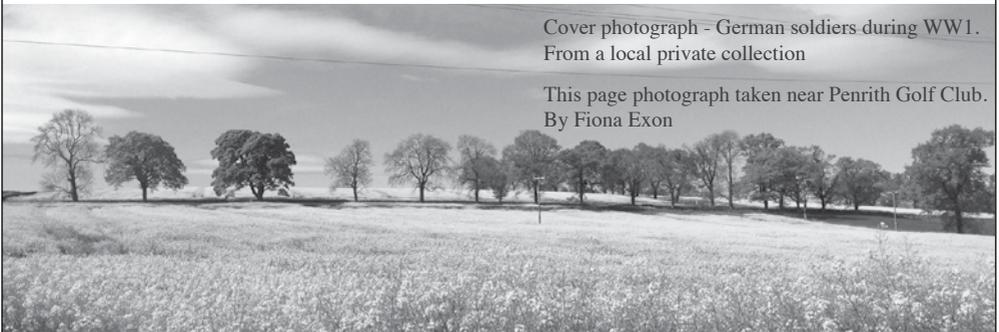
Please send your news to [copy@great-salkeld.net](mailto:copy@great-salkeld.net). We welcome Readers' Views on articles which are published and invite our readers to suggest topics for inclusion in future issues. News and Events are also included on the Village Website: [www.great-salkeld.net](http://www.great-salkeld.net) The website contains the Diary of Village Events, which is frequently updated. Email Linda Jervis on [diary@great-salkeld.net](mailto:diary@great-salkeld.net) for diary inclusion. We won't always have space to include every article or item in the current Craic; some items will be held over to subsequent issues, while some items will go onto the village website.

### ADVERTISE in CRAIC

Advert rates per issue are: ¼ page £15, ½ page £25, Full page £50. Single A5 flier inserts £20. Discounts for a full year. Contact us: [copy@great-salkeld.net](mailto:copy@great-salkeld.net) ■

Cover photograph - German soldiers during WW1.  
From a local private collection

This page photograph taken near Penrith Golf Club.  
By Fiona Exon



As a child I grew up watching Dr Who. At school, we would talk about travelling through time and how we could change the world: this time travel would also have made our history lesson much more fun and interesting. Fifty years have passed since then and time travel is still not yet an option. Had it been, and we were to travel back to the year 1915, we would only need to travel a land distance of 22 miles north from Great Salkeld to witness a world-changing event taking place. This 'event' would have a profound effect on our civilisation and the world we know today.

Our landing site would be Gretna: as we step out of our time machine we would be

overlooking the flatlands of Scotland where its border meets the River Esk and the Solway Firth estuary. One year has already passed since the start of World War 1, with Britain and its Allies very close to being defeated by Germany. They could not compete with the superior munitions power that the Germans had.

If you were to pick up a copy of The Times dated 14 May 1915 you would see the headline; "Need for shells: British attacks checked: Limited supply the cause: A Lesson from France". The British Government, led by Asquith, was about to fall and a coalition government was soon to be formed. Under this coalition, Lloyd George would be appointed 'Minister of Munitions'. Plans would be put in place to build a large munitions factory and Gretna was to be the location of this site.



The women in the munitions factories hand mixed a combination of the cordite and gun cotton they called 'devils porridge.'

The factory that was soon to be built would end up being the largest factory in the world; in size, it would be 9 miles long by 2 miles wide and would cover over 90,000 acres of land. It would stretch from Dornock in the west to Longtown over the border in the east. 'HM Factory Gretna' was to be built under great secrecy and was given the military codename 'Moorside'. This region was chosen as it would be outside the range of the Luftwaffe and too distant for

any Zeppelins to approach from the east. There were also excellent rail connections with the rest of the UK.

During the period of construction of Moorside, up to 30,000 people were employed on site. As well as building the factory in which the munitions powder would be manufactured, there was a need for accommodation to house the vast workforce. To achieve this, two new townships were built from scratch and they were named Eastriggs and Gretna. Once the factories were complete and ready to produce the 'cordite', which was the explosive powder to be used in the production of the munitions, a workforce had to be appointed. Before the onset of the war, this type of work had been done by men, but given that all able-bodied men were now active on the war front, this task now had to be taken on by women. They

arrived from all over the country and even from as far afield as the Commonwealth, with the belief that it was their patriotic duty to help with the war effort. There was even a daily train service from Penrith to take workers to the factory and back. At the peak of production, there were over 11,000 women and 5,000 men working at the site. The 'cordite powder' they were producing became known as "The Devil's Porridge" after the writer Arthur Conan Doyle visited the site.

The infrastructure required to run the site was massive: a telephone exchange that had to handle up to 2.5 million calls per year; kitchens and bakeries that daily had to produce in excess of 14,000 meals and 13,000 loaves; a laundry that daily had to wash over 6,000 items. The factory had over 30 miles of road. 100 miles of water main, 125 miles of railway track, 34 railway engines, and a water treatment plant handling over 10 million gallons a day. The site even had its own coal-fired power station supplying the factory and towns with electricity. It was during the construction period that the Government had to introduce drinking constraints which led to the 'State Run Brewery' being formed.

Such was the gratitude for the workforce in their commitment to the war effort that King George V and Queen Mary visited the site. The dedication of the women to the war effort at Moorside no doubt had a very positive effect on the outcome of WW1 and the world as we know it today. Because of their commitment, the suffragette movement was able to further its campaign, so gaining for women equal rights with men by 1928.

You don't need access to a time machine to participate in this spectacular event in our history. You can, as I did, travel to Eastriggs and visit The Devil's Porridge Museum at Daleside, which is open 7 days a week. There is so much to see, with reconstructions of the working environment and many artefacts from that period. In July the exhibition will be moving to a new purpose-built museum on the east side of Eastriggs.

Details can be found at [www.devilsporrige.co.uk/home-page/4579060703](http://www.devilsporrige.co.uk/home-page/4579060703)

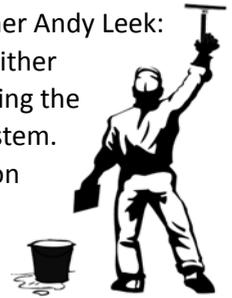
Eastriggs and Gretna Heritage, Daleside, Butterdales Road, Eastriggs, DG12 6TQ - Telephone 01461 700021

Opening times are Monday to Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday - noon to 4 pm. ■

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## Reflecting on WWI - The Many Battles Faced by WWI's Nurses

Nursing in World War One was exhausting, often dangerous work and the women who volunteered experienced the horror of war first-hand, some paying the ultimate price. But their story is surrounded by myth and their full contribution often goes unrecognised, writes Shirley Williams.

Yet the myth of the gentle young nurse, often a voluntary and untrained VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment), in her starched and spotless white uniform, was universally admired. It echoed centuries of stories from King Arthur and the Round Table to Shakespeare's Henry V, where rough but brave warriors encountered graceful young women who cared for them.

Young women in 1914, like their parents, expected the war to be short. Music hall songs were patriotic and optimistic. Women were expected to wait at home patiently or, if they were from working-class homes, to join munitions factories. "Keep the home fires burning," they were abjured. "Though your boys are far away, they will soon come home." Had they been injured, however, there would have been very few nurses to look after them.

The main trained corps of military nurses was the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS). It was founded in 1902 at the time of the Boer War and in 1914 was less than 300 strong. At the end of the war, four years later, it numbered over 10,000 nurses. In addition, several other organisations formed earlier in the century had the nursing of members of the armed services as their main purpose - for instance, the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry launched in 1907.

Apart from them, there were thousands of untrained women working as midwives or nurses in civilian life, but they had little or no experience of working with soldier patients and their status in society was little better than that of domestic servants.

Because the British Army was so resolutely opposed to all female military nurses except the QAIMNS, early volunteers from Britain were obliged to serve instead with the French



and Belgian forces. Many of these early volunteers were from aristocratic families and their servants. Powerful women who ran large families and large estates were well versed in management and saw no great problems in managing a military hospital instead. Their confidence in their own abilities was impressive.

The most famous of these women was the Duchess of Sutherland, nicknamed Meddlesome Millie. Soon after war was declared she and other grand ladies like her took doctors and nurses to France and Belgium, organising their own transport and equipment to set up hospitals and casualty clearing stations.

Whatever bureaucratic obstacles were put in their way, the huge and bloody tide of casualties by the spring of 1915 simply swept them away. Even the British Army's top brass yielded to the combined pressures of need and confident commitment.

At this stage of the war women began to be invited to serve in a range of capacities, of which nursing was one. Thousands of young women from middle-class homes with little experience of domestic work, not much relevant education and total ignorance of male bodies, volunteered and found themselves pitched into military hospitals.

They were not, in most cases, warmly welcomed. Professional nurses, battling for some kind of recognition and for proper training, feared this large invasion of unqualified volunteers

## *The Many Battles Faced by WW1's Nurses - continued....*

would undermine their efforts. Poorly paid VADs were used mainly as domestic labour, cleaning floors, changing bed linen, swilling out bedpans, but were rarely allowed until later in the war to change dressings or administer drugs.

The war produced medical issues largely unknown in civilian life and not previously experienced by doctors or nurses. Most common were wound infections, contracted when men riddled by machine gun bullets had bits of uniform and the polluted mud of the trenches driven into their abdomens and internal organs. There were no antibiotics, of course, and disinfectants were crude and insufficiently supplied.

In Britain much work was done to deal with infected wounds but thousands died of tetanus or gangrene before any effective antidote was discovered. Towards the end of the war, a few radical solutions emerged. One of these was blood transfusion affected simply by linking up a tube between the patient and the donor, a direct transference. A version can be seen at the excellent WW1 exhibition of the Florence Nightingale Museum in the hospital where she herself nursed, St Thomas's in London.

When the war ended, most VADs left the service though a few of the most adventurous

went away to other wars. They went home to a world in which men were scarce. It was as much the huge loss of hundreds of thousands of young men in France, Belgium and Great Britain, not to speak of Russia and of course Germany, that advanced the cause of equality and the extension of the suffrage to women.

Lacking men, especially in clerical and commercial fields, employers appointed women and they in turn looked for paid employment and a living wage. But the professions were reluctant to change. Professional nurses, the backbone of the wartime service, failed to get legal recognition of registered status until 1943. Some drifted into public health and midwifery but nursing remained something of a Cinderella service.

Much has improved in the last 60 years, but full acceptance of the knowledge and experience of nurses as equal contributors with doctors to the wellbeing of patients is still a work in progress. Being a largely female profession remains an unjust handicap. ■

*(Extracted from BBC News Magazine)*

*Photograph from a local private collection*

### *WWI Commemoration - In his own words....extracts from a letter from the front written in France by a local soldier*

*December 1915*

*It is much colder today. I walked this morning some 2 ½ miles .... and found the little cemetery where Jim is buried. It was half under water but I waded through the mud and saw his grave. There is a rough wooden cross over the mound of Flanders mud. I suppose that after the war a grateful country will do something to preserve the last resting places of those who have made the greatest of sacrifices. These rough burial grounds bring home to one almost more than anything else in this war scarred country the terrible tragedy of our times - the folly of mankind.*

**In future issues of Craic this year we will take more extracts from letters from the WW1 trenches. There will be humour, fortitude, work-a-day observations and messages of hope for an end to the war.**

# Cumbria's Tourism Event of the Year Eden Art's C-Art: [www.c-art.org.uk](http://www.c-art.org.uk) 13 - 28 September 2014



This June, C-Art was awarded TOURISM EVENT OF THE YEAR 2014 at the Cumbria Tourism Awards. It is a beautiful arts trail across the fells and dales of the Lake District and Cumbria, and a chance to see beyond the studio walls as dozens of artists open their doors to the public, creating an opportunity to follow a trail of open studios through the stunning Cumbrian landscape.

The Eden Valley and Cumbria have long been areas that have a lively, creative and popular art scene. C-Art is Cumbria's largest visual arts programme, co-ordinated by Eden Arts. It features exhibitions, events and open studios with the sole purpose of promoting Cumbria's rich creative talent. The highlight is the open studios and galleries event which will take place from 13 – 28 September. Over 150 artists, designers and independent galleries will open their doors to the public and numerous art and craft workshops, demonstrations and special exhibitions will take place.

Watch out for yellow C-Art road signs all over Cumbria pointing you to a C-Art studio, gallery, installation or event. You can purchase artworks at the studios.

Well-known established artists, designers and crafts-people open their studios to visitors. Emerging talented local artistic talents are also featured.



**One young artist is Katarina Prior.** Now in her 20's, Katarina was born and bred in the Penrith area. She studied at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design and

at the University of Cumbria. For C-Art, she will be exhibiting a large scale installation called "Mayflies". These paper mayflies will be installed around Penrith; at Rheged, Penrith Library, Penrith Tourist Information, Penrith and Eden Museum and St Andrews Church..

The event gives you the opportunity to meet artists, learn new skills and buy unique artworks. The 2014 event will also see artists taking their work and art practice outside of their studios into unusual and extraordinary locations. From mountain peaks, castles, cathedrals, mines and hillsides, art installations and artists will be taking up residence throughout the remarkable Cumbrian landscape.

## The C-Art Trail



## About Eden Arts

Eden Arts is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation based in England's biggest and most rural district, Eden in Cumbria. Eden Arts promotes, invents, dreams and cooks up all sorts of creative projects from commissions to participatory to gigs and cinema. ■



# Memories of 1940s - Garden Crops

**A**t a very early age I had to assist on the two allotments rented by my adoptive family. I must admit I hated the tasks given to me and a couple of hours of the work seemed never ending.

Chemicals were never used so I had to pick caterpillars off the brassicas myself and put them into a jam jar of water.

In those early days, most vegetables had pests of some variety. When you shelled peas, you had to be careful to save the ones without maggots.

No crops were picked when

young and tender and, as a result, nearly everything was tough or stringy.

I vividly remember Sunday mornings when cabbage boiled for hours. You can imagine what the smell was like. The allotments were productive which was just as well as food was rationed because of the War. Food was preserved in quantity. Runner and French beans were salted, stone and soft fruits stored in 'kilner' jars. More importantly, no matter what the month, some vegetable crops were available. Main crop potatoes were lifted, allowed to dry, stored in hessian sacks and kept in a frost-free place. Cabbage, leeks and some root crops were left in the ground and dug as required. Be careful with the varieties you grow and you can become self-sufficient. Although I hated gardening at that time, one person taught me a lot. His name was Tom Butcher, a nurseryman, where my

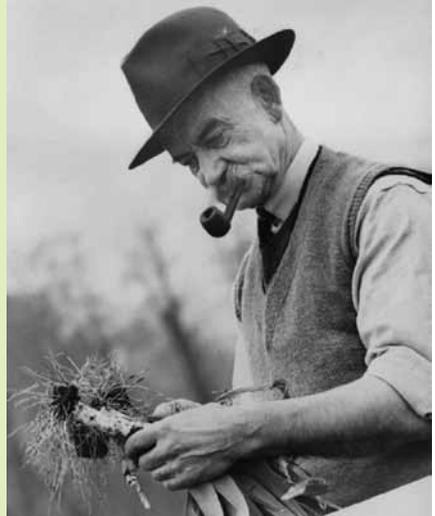


foster parents bought half bushels of fruits. He always showed me how he grew crops and taught me the correct way to mulch etc. I can visualize him now with his leather apron and black-banded straw hat. I am sure that he

had a lot to do with me becoming a professional gardener...■

Ron D." Happy gardening"

*A gardener from the 1940s...*





*An FE2b*

The Great War 1914-1918 was the first three-dimensional war. All previous wars had been fought, since time immemorial, on either land or sea or both, but now, thanks to the then recent invention of the aeroplane, a new dimension had been added – the air.

Britain entered this new form of war by forming “The Royal Flying Corps” (RFC) in April 1912. Initially, aircraft and balloons were used as observation platforms – both for reconnaissance and artillery observation. Just before the outbreak of war, a Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) was also formed, separated out of the RFC but with shared training facilities.

The arming of aircraft and using them in an offensive role initially faced many challenges. Most planes were either biplanes (2 wings, one above the other) or triplanes (3 wings). This meant that you had many struts and wires holding the wing structures together, and then you had the all-important propeller in the front. So the problem was where you placed the armaments without destroying your own propellers, struts and wires. Eventually, the synchronised machine-gun solved the problem whereby you could fire through the propeller without shredding it to pieces.

The aircraft could be used for bombing, even though this usually involved the second crew member acting as navigator, observer, gunner and bomb-aimer, hanging over the side and dropping a bomb by hand – a long way from the sophistication of bombing a century later.

When the RFC went to France in 1914, it comprised 4 squadrons (12 aircraft per squadron) and with those in reserve, a total strength of 63 planes and 900 personnel. During the war, the RFC developed into having a U.K. home establishment for training and defence against German zeppelins and Gotha bomber raids. It was also deployed to the Middle East, The Balkans and Italy. At the end of the war, the RFC became the Royal Air Force (RAF) as from 1 April 1918, with a total inventory of 22,000 aircraft, 290,000 personnel and 387 squadrons.

It can therefore be seen that one of the greatest challenges facing the RFC was recruitment and training of personnel to allow for this massive expansion. My wife's grandfather (Mary



*Lt SG Barlow in the Observer's cockpit of an FE2b of 101 Squadron preparing for take-off ... and on leave in September 1917*



Boulter's father) was just one of those recruited. Having served since the outbreak of war in the 20th Battalion The Lancashire Fusiliers, he was extracted from the trenches on the Somme. On 11th July 1917, he was posted to No.101 Squadron RFC as an observer, following initial training at the School of Military Aeronautics in Reading. He flew many sorties during the Battle of Passchendaele (31 July – 7 November 1917) and as an observer, was responsible for bombing, machine gunning, observation and navigation. The Squadron saw 15 months of service in the front line, during which it lost 7 men killed and 10 wounded due to enemy action. However, even more worrying were the number lost due to aircraft mechanical failure – 13 killed and 7 injured, plus 23 becoming prisoners of war, no doubt due to forced landings behind enemy lines.

So the squalor and danger of the Army's trench warfare was swapped for the trepidation and danger of the RFC's new medium of waging war – what a choice. ■

## Reflecting on WWI - Our Green and Pleasant Land

by Jack Downie

*Geese and chickens grazing by the  
Village Hall (date uncertain but  
probably pre-1920  
- from the collection of Les Carrick*



In an attempt to concentrate our minds on the war that was meant to end all wars, we have been bombarded with documentaries, TV dramas, and written articles in the local and national press. World War 1 brought about a social revolution with the people of Ireland and Russia rebelling against what they perceived as oppressive rule by often absent landlords. It also heralded a change in farming both locally and nationally.

But what was it like in Great Salkeld before the war and what has changed since then? I found an old photograph, dated 1914, depicting a cow grazing on what is now the playground by the church, but very little else appears to be different from what one would see today. I then had a look at the farming records for Nunwick farm from 1895 and was intrigued that, along with the register of costs of corn seeds, manure, livestock etc, there was a list of servant's wages. One tends to forget that 100 years ago much of the village was owned by

Nunwick Hall estate and many of its residents were "in service" either in the Hall or on one of its farms. Fortunately, Richard Heywood Thompson, the land owner at that time, followed by Colonel Thompson, whom some of you will remember, were benevolent landlords and people were looked after through those austere times during and after the war.

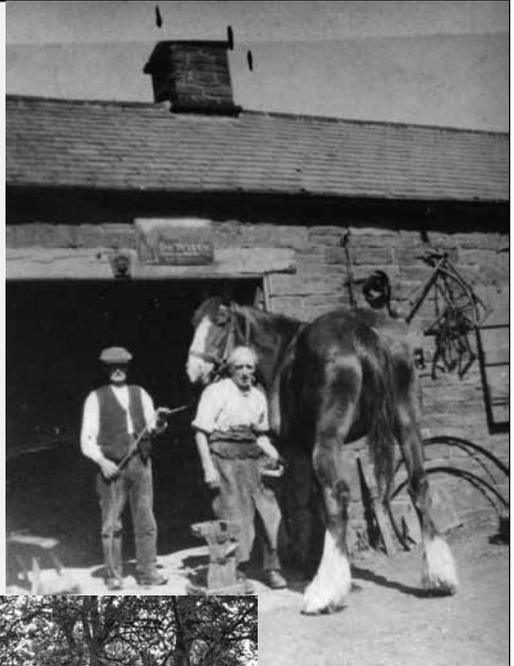
After comparing maps from around 1900, 1935, 1988 and 2014, it seems to me that the landscape has changed very little since those magnificent horses depicted in the film *War Horse* were the mainstay in any farming business. On a recent walk around the perimeters of the parish, I noticed that most of the stone walls are still intact and, in many ways, these protected the landscape from massive amalgamation of fields. Ownership has changed but not until later years as in the 1920's and 30's, due to the war hangover pushing economies into recession, farmers had to be resilient to survive. Being part of a larger estate afforded some protection and around the village, Burrell Green, Beckbank, South Dyke,

North Dyke, The Keld, Croft House, Rotherham Green, Town End, Wetheral House and the Village Farm were all Nunwick farms.

Most people grew their own vegetables and much of the village was involved in agriculture in some shape or form as lack of transport aided self sufficiency. If you walk along the main road in the village, you will pass Townend Farm, Ruskin House, Mid Town Farm, The Village Farm, Hunter Hall Farm; they still are or until recently were working farms. As tanks and lorries replaced horses during the First War, tractors and mechanised machinery took over on the fields, increased productivity and opened up new possibilities for bringing produce to market. In order to stand still or expand, farms had to increase their size and decrease their workforce and the smaller farms remained only in name. Unlike other parts of the country, Great

Salkeld was slow to respond in the rush into increased brake horsepower. It is not that long since the only tractor we had at Nunwick was a grey Fergie and Dougie Thomson raced through the village at 5mph on his very modern red Massey Ferguson that never seemed to look dirty.

Now we live in dread at meeting some of those huge tractors with cultivating machines attached to both the front and the rear hurtling down Waingate like a train coming through a tunnel. Our roads and fields with their stone dykes were not



*Blacksmiths in Great Salkeld - from the collection of Les Carrick*



*Unchanged - probably for hundreds of years. A track over Banty Beck*

built for 21st century agriculture. Over the last 12 years, I have embarked upon a scheme to put walls back up, plant miles of new hedges, and this coupled with all the new trees being planted will hopefully ensure that in 50 years' time, the landscape in Great Salkeld will not have changed much from the turn of the 20th century and will still be able to be called a "green and pleasant land". Take time to walk around the footpaths and bridleways and reflect on the thought that it is our farmers who are guardians of our environment and in my view, at a local level at least, their efforts have stood the test of time. ■

# FEEDING TOMMY

The following recipes and hints and tips are taken from original battlefield recipes, from the archives of The Royal Logistics Corps Museum.

## Army Cook's Tips from the log book of G.N.R.Smith, 368 Siege Battery RGA.

"To render pork sausages more digestible thoroughly prick the sausages and plunge into boiling water for 5 minutes. Then fry them the usual way. This is the proper way to cook sausages."

"To prevent greens boiling over, add a piece of fat about the size of a walnut."

### STALE BREAD

"It can be made equal to new baked bread by being immersed in cold water and rebaked for about one hour.

Slices or bits can be dipped in milk and baked in hot oven. This process makes delicious rusks which can be used in many ways."

### SAVE YOUR EGGS

"If a tablespoon of vinegar is added to a gill of milk when mixing eggs, the cakes will not only be much lighter but will only need one egg instead of two."

### SOUSED HERRINGS

**Ingredients:** ✓ Fish ✓ Onions ✓ Cloves  
✓ Pepper Corns ✓ Salt & Pepper ✓ Vinegar  
✓ Cold Water

#### Method

- Clean and gut fish, removing scales, then leave in salt water 30 minutes.
- Then place in baking dish, tail to tail.
- Sprinkle on onions which have been peeled and cut up very fine.
- Add peppercorns, cloves, pepper, salt and vinegar.
- Dilute with equal parts of cold water.
- Cook in moderate oven for 40 minutes.



### FRIED LIVER AND ONIONS

**Ingredients:** ✓ Liver ✓ Onions ✓ Flour ✓  
Pepper & Salt ✓ Dripping

#### Method

- Cut liver into thin slices.
- Peel and cut up onions into rings.
- Place flour, pepper and salt into mixing bowl.
- Add liver, rub in till absorbed, then place into boiling fat, taking care to have one layer. Keep moving to prevent burning.
- Fry onions till nicely brown, and sprinkle over liver.
- Add a little stock and serve up after pouring away any excess fat.

### MILK BISCUIT PUDDING (for 100 men).

**Ingredients:** ✓ Biscuits ( 15lb)  
✓ Milk (3lb or 3 tins ) ✓ Sugar (5lb)  
✓ Currants ( 4lb ) ✓ Spice ( 1 packet )  
✓ Candied Peel ( 4oz)

#### Method

- Soak biscuits until soft, about 3 hours in cold water.
- Wash and pick over currants, cut up finely.
- Place biscuits, sugar and currants into baking dishes.
- Add milk and mix well together with spice and peel and place in oven till cooked.
- Time 1 hour. ■



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Collection Service Available

Free dog sitting if you need to leave your doggie  
for longer

Open 7 days a week

Stanton House, Newby, Penrith CA10 3EX

Only 15 mins from Penrith, Shap or Appleby

01931 714554



07961 667940

## Kitchen

## Bathroom - Bedroom

## Installations

# Dave Jessop

Penrith

## 07795805558

[www.davejessopkitchenfitter.co.uk](http://www.davejessopkitchenfitter.co.uk)



Approved by Cumbria County Council

Trading Standards