

**** REDBRIDGE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR Gerard Green, Redbridge Museum
123 pages, 2015. Numerous illustrations, colour & b&w photographs, £4.95.

This is a very good and glossy overview of Redbridge's contribution to the war effort. Put together by Gerard Green: the borough's Museum Officer it draws on the Museum's, & Information & Heritage's holdings of personal effects: diaries, letters, medals, even Lieut Herbert Beck's RFC wooden grave cross as well as local newspapers, ie Ilford's Recorder, and Guardian. The book is an excellent montage of the men and women who fought for the country on foreign fields and those who 'kept the 'home fires burning' mainly on the local fields, farms and for local companies, ie Ilford Aeroplane Works, Henry Hughes & Son of Hainault which made compasses and navigational aids, and even Ilford Council's Munitions Factory made shells and cartridges.

Belgian postal refugees were housed at Valentines Mansion (already written about by Pat Heron) and Gerard points out the possible connection between local artist and Ilford postman Samuel Hancock, who may have suggested that the Belgians be cared for here, something I've always wondered about.

Over 10,000 Ilford men joined up and over 1,000 never returned - a high 10% casualty rate. Brothers Dennis and Reginald O'Donoghue of Seen Kings never made it home whilst the fight still went on at home. In 1918 Ethel Allen, a married Highlands School teacher, complained about her low salary (men were paid more than women for doing the same work) to which an 'Ilford Ratepayer' objected against in a vitriolic style, whilst 'Absolutely Disgusted' of Cranbrook Park ranted about the frivolity of holding dances.

Because of the 100th anniversary of the war more new research is currently being done and considering the high quality of production, the book is excellently priced and good value.

Jef Page, July 2015.