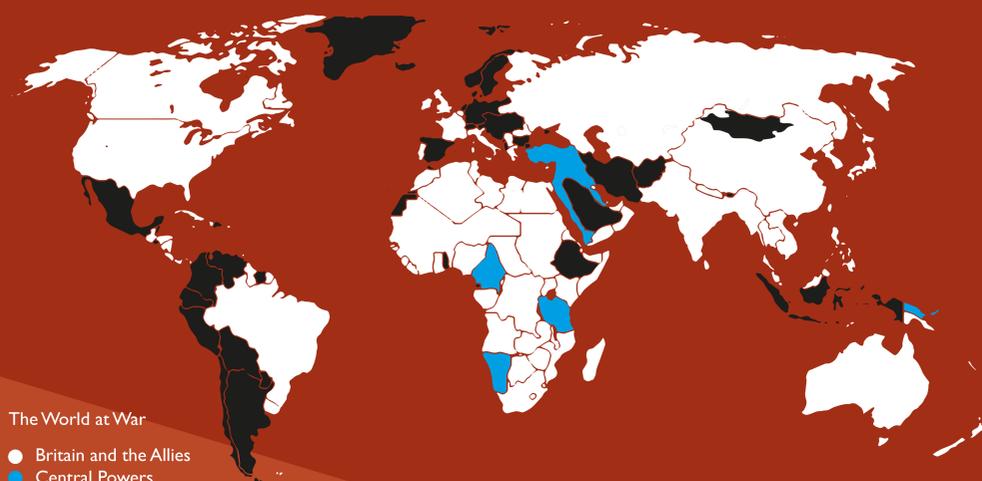


A War to End All Wars

The Great War

1914 saw the start of a conflict in Europe that was to impact on people across the globe. Bradford, like all cities, towns and villages in Britain was touched by this Great War which people at the time believed was the 'war to end all wars'. It was fought on a huge scale and involved approximately seventy million people in combat across Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.



The World at War

- Britain and the Allies
- Central Powers
- Neutral Countries

The men enlisted in the British armed services came from across the British Empire including from Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, India, Nepal, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa. The biggest volunteer regiments were in the British Indian Army; one and a half million men from the countries now known as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh fought in the conflict.

The Allies included Britain, America, Japan and Russia. The nations on the opposing side - the Central Powers - were Germany and the Ottoman Empire, which had its centre in modern day Turkey. Some nations stayed out of the war altogether and remained neutral. This war was truly a First World War.



The 20th Deccan Horse, Indian Army, drawn up in ranks on the Western Front, 14th July 1916. Image courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

Bradford's Men and Boys

In Bradford many young men and boys rushed to join the armed forces in the early months of the war. As elsewhere in the country they often joined the army with friends; they had things in common, such as a shared place of work, a shared church, or a shared hobby. By the 26th September 1914 a full battalion of one thousand and sixty nine men had been created, this was the 16th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (1st Bradford). As the war progressed a second Bradford battalion was formed. The 18th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (2nd Bradford), commenced enlistment on February 8th 1915. These battalions are often referred to as the 'Bradford Pals'. Many men from the Cathedral community joined the army as volunteers, or because by law they had to do so. It became a requirement in 1916 for all able bodied men aged between 18 and 40 years to enlist for military service, unless they were widowed with children, in a reserved occupation, or ministers of a religion. This was known as conscription.



When the Bradford Pals left for the war they were unusually dressed in hard-wearing blue postal uniforms. Soldiers usually wore khaki uniforms, but before the war this dye came from Germany. By 1915 the production of khaki in Britain recovered, mainly due to its production in Bradford mills. Image courtesy of Ben Chalcraft.

Many Bradford men and boys lost their lives in the First World War. Their sacrifice, the freedom and the peace hard won is commemorated in memorials around the Cathedral, and in particular through the World War I Memorial Bells. Their inscriptions record the people of Bradford's gratitude for the blessings of victory, peace and freedom, affirming:

"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13

Little Germany

The area in which the Cathedral stands is adjacent to Little Germany. At the time of the First World War a number of the cloth houses in this area were owned by Jewish and Christian merchants who had their roots in Germany and Austria. Bradford was also home to German butchers and shopkeepers. When war broke out some shops were attacked and German people were arrested and interred, but many of these émigrés were quick to volunteer for the British forces.



Captain Norman Müller

Colonel George H Müller was a sidesman and worshipped at the Cathedral. Born in Germany, he joined the British Army and was the commanding officer of the 16th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment. His two sons John and Norman also fought in the war. Norman was a captain in the Leeds Rifles. He died on the 28th July 1918. His life and death are commemorated on the Cathedral's plaque to the fallen, which is located close to the World War I memorial window. George and John both survived the war.



The tower of Bradford Cathedral's as seen from the streets of Little Germany