

**NOBEL'S EXPLOSIVES COMPANY LTD
REGENT WORKS, LINLITHGOW**

1918

Staff and employees of the Regent Factory and their friends held the annual social gathering in the Victoria Hall, Linlithgow. The Food Controller's Orders and imposed rationing was a challenge so a concert was held instead of the usual social function. The manager, Mr Muir, gave his usual address highlighting events in the past year with the country still under the shadow of a ghastly war. There had been considerable progress at the factory and Nobel's and the community were proud of the work the Regent Factory employees were doing to back up their fighting men at the front. The year had been a busy one but it had also been a harmonious year at the factory. Mr Muir personally praised the work force for their efforts. The proceeds of the dance and concert amounting to £21 16s were passed on to the Linlithgow Branch of the Red Cross Society.

In March work at the factory was quiet and employees were given Saturday off. The Factory had been extremely busy since the outbreak of war and the present lull was due to the demands on shipping in other directions.

The week beginning 12th April, was officially designated War Weapons Week in Linlithgow and Linlithgow War Savings Association secretary, Mr George Adams, was busy receiving money from investors in War Bonds and Certificates. A prize scheme had been instituted at Nobel's to encourage members of staff and employees to invest. Thirteen prizes were given by the firm, and five were given personally by Mr Muir and the sum of £1,038 10s was raised.

On 2nd August 1918 notice was received that LCpl George Baird, Royal Scots, a former employee of Nobel's Regent Factory and youngest son of Mr John Baird, 105 High St, Linlithgow, was severely wounded in the left shoulder and arm by shrapnel. LCpl Baird had been wounded before and was now in a hospital in England. He had been a County Territorial and was mobilised at the outbreak of the war.

A major event in the calendar for Nobel's occurred at the end of August 1918 when the staff and employees of the Regent Factory entertained a large gathering of wounded soldiers from the Edinburgh War Hospital at Bangour in the grounds of Linlithgow Academy. The weather was favourable for outdoor amusements and the 'wounded heroes' had a very happy time. Arriving in a couple of motor char-a-bancs [buses] supplied by the Linlithgow Motor Touring Company, 'the gallant guests were accorded a very hearty welcome by Mr Wm. Muir, manager of the factory. The Kinneil Band played a number of excellent selections under the leadership of Mr Sneddon and rendered an enjoyable musical entertainment'.

After the entertainment, the soldiers made their way into the Academy hall where tea was provided. The Regent Factory girls had made a special personal effort to entertain their guests as generously as possible within the limitations imposed by food control (rationing). To be able to do this they had practised self-denial for some time before and had 'saved' rations, so that they could provide an excellent tea-table.

Soldiers and civilians then took to the field for the sports programme during the afternoon and the various events were carried through with great spirits as everyone entered wholeheartedly into the fun. The events including sack race, egg and spoon, wheel barrow, tug of war, thread the needle, obstacle and veterans' races and football took place. The less athletic danced to the music played by the band.

At the conclusion of the sports, tea was again provided in the Academy hall and Mrs Muir presented the prizes to the successful competitors.

The proceedings were appropriately brought to a close by the band playing the National Anthem and the cars to convey the soldiers to Bangour were waiting to take the gallant men back. The street was lined with well-wishers to see the visitors off. The weather was favourable and the soldiers were delighted with their outing and entertainment by the staff and employees of the Regent Factory.

On 11th November, the Armistice was signed, and in late December 1918 the Regent Factory of Nobel's Explosives Company Ltd, closed for an extended holiday owing to a lull in the demand for goods manufactured in the factory. But, the *Gazette* reported, operations were expected to resume shortly, changing production from military back to normal commercial manufacturing.