

*From the Bexhill Chronicle, Saturday, October 17, 1914. (DSCF2736)*

### **BEXHILL TRADESMEN'S PATRIOTIC ENTERPRISE**

A visitor to the South-Eastern Station last night between 9 and 10 o'clock would have imagined himself behind the scenes of some sanguinary battle. On the platform were lying wounded men, severely wounded men, who had just been removed from the railway train, and were to be conveyed in motor-cars to the hospital. In tender charge of the wounded were a number of men in civilian clothes, but each bearing on his arm a white armband, with the letters B. T. B. C.

The presence of the well-known figure of Transport Officer J. R. Willy, and of Mr Fred Sewell, explained the mystery of these letters, for one realised that this was but a practice drill of the recently-formed Bexhill Tradesmen's Bearer Company, of which the one is instructor and the other secretary.

The company was formed without flourish of trumpets by a number of Bexhill tradesmen, and drill has been proceeding for the past eight weeks at the Devonshire Hotel, under the instruction of the ever-enthusiastic Mr Willy, who is never tired of teaching ambulance work. It is absolutely self-supporting, and it is at the service, at a few minutes notice, of all agencies which have to handle sick or wounded.

The drills take place on Tuesday's and Fridays, and the Stationmaster at the South Eastern Station, Mr. F. W. Baker, has kindly placed at their disposal the waiting-rooms at the station and a railway carriage so that they may have ample practice at the very difficult and particular work of removing wounded men from train to hospital.

People who have not seen it done, little realise the difficulty there is in taking a badly-wounded man from a railway carriage, placing him comfortably in a motor-car, and lifting him carefully out of there when the hospital is reached. To assist the work several members and others have offered to lend motor-cars – Mr F. Giggins (whose car was in use last night), Mr. Tom Smith, Mr. Maltby, Mr. J. R. Shaw, Mr. Martin, Mr. P. Waghorn, Mr F. Waghorn, Mr S. Smith, the Pelham Hotel, Mr A. E. Small, Hastings; and Mr W. Edwards and Mr A. E. Neal have placed their motorcycles and side-cars at the disposal of the Association if required.

Then the members have purchased their own stretchers, which have been provided at a very special rate by Mr. C. G. Cornelius, one of the section leaders. Their pharmacist, Mr J. Sheffield, has very kindly presented them with a full kit.

There are four sections, and the leaders are: Company leader, Mr F. C. Sewell, hon. secretary; section leaders, Messrs. F. Giggins and C. G. Cornelius. Under their indefatigable instructor they have made great progress, and their work has been approved and their services accepted, if needed, by the East Sussex and Buchanan Hospitals, Mr J. Holden, the L. B. and S. C. Railway, and Mr F. W. Baker, the South Eastern Stationmasters; while the Bexhill Corporation and the Mayor of Hastings have expressed their approbation of the work.

There is no red-tape about the organisation. At a few minutes notice, as we state, detachments will be ready with stretchers and motor-cars to convey wounded or sick from any train to any hospital. They will act as bearers under any Red Cross organisation, or any doctor who may be present. They have shown an excellent spirit, and while one hopes the need for their services may not be great, it's good to know they are there.

Now that they are well-established they invite other tradesmen to join either as members or hon. members. The subscription is only 2s. 6d., and several hon. Members have already joined, while Mr Robson has given a subscription to the funds in recognition of the good work. All who wish to assist or take part should communicate with the hon. Secretary, and all who wish the aid of the company can get it if they ring up Mr Sewell at the Devonshire hotel.

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