



## Potterne Tribunal Exemption Appeals 1916

On 27th January 1916, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith's government passed the 1916 Military Service Act and introduced conscription to the British Isles. It came into force on 2nd March, 1916. Previously the British Government had relied on voluntary enlistment, and latterly a kind of moral conscription called the Derby Scheme.

### **Richard Thomas Allen**

Crookwood Farm, Potterne, farmer, applied for absolute exemption, and the military authorities assenting, the application was granted. - Applicant said he was running his farm of 150 acres, with one man over military age and a boy.

### **Frank Bailey**

of the Butts, Potterne, general labourer, in the employ of Mr. Miller, a builder, asked for exemption. He did not milk: Mr. Miller had some young cattle but no milking cows. He (the applicant) had been attested and was passed for home services. - The military opposed the application, and it was held to have failed.

### **Arthur Chiffance**

Blount's Court Farm, Potterne, was similarly exempted. His father had just died, and his brother was expecting to be called up for service. He was the only person available to look after the farm.

### **George Turner**

of the Manor Farm, Potterne, bailiff, applied for total exemption. The application was not opposed by the military. - The application was supported by Mrs. Turner, the tenant of the farm, and exemption was granted.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 26 February 1916.**

### **Richard Thomas Allen**

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**Source: Devizes and Wilts. Advertiser 2 March 1916.**

**George Henry Perrett**

of Potterne, 29, general labourer, in the employ of Messrs. W.E. Chivers, who said he had over an acre of land with no one to help in the stocking, which was deferred by the weather. - A member of the Tribunal asked if the applicant was not in the 800 for whom Mr. Chivers appealed, and he replied that he was too late in telling them. - The military opposed the application. - Sir Horace McMahon said the man was not in a munition worker in the sense in which exemption badges would be given. - The Chairman said the Court must decide that he must join; if he could get exemption from the Government on the ground of his work that did not affect the findings. - Application refused.

**George Pearce**

Five Lanes, Potterne, in partnership in a farm with his brother, asked for exemption. They had 30 cows, 25 in milk, and no one helped them. - In reply to Sir Horace McMahon, the applicant said he went to the Barracks in February, and was told that he was medically unfit for any service. His brother was 31 years of age; he supposed the brother came under the Act. - Sir Horace suggested that this man should be exempted for a month, so that they might see what happened in the case of his brother. His opinion was that one of the two should go. - Sir Horace asked the applicant why he appealed if he were unfit, and the applicant represented that he did not know what his position was. - A month granted.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 11 March 1916.**

**Frederick Bridewell**

20, cowman and carter, in the service of Messrs. Long Bros. - Ordered to serve.

**William Clack**

The Butts, working bailiff for Mrs Grace Bailey, widow, of Wick Farm. - Conditional exemption.

**Sidney James Fowler**

High Street, baker and grocer. - Conditional exemption.

**Henry Thomas Merrett**

31, Wick Farm, employed by Mr. G. Pottow, Eastwell Farm, as milker and engine driver. - Conditional exemption for a month. - Mr. Pottow said he would be pleased to have help of the ladies when they were ready, so that the men could get on the land. - The Chairman: It is coming you may be sure of that.

**Richard Pearce**

36, of Five Lanes, who is in partnership with his brother as farmers, applied under the Military Service Act. The military objected. - The Chairman (to the appellant): One of you will have to go. - Mr. Pearce: Are you coming down to help to milk the cows, sir (laughter). - The Chairman: No, You must get some women to help you/ - Mr. Pearce: A fine place for a woman to come to. - Refused.

**George Owen Watts**

18, Montecello Farm, cowman, employed by his father. - Conditional exemption.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 18 March 1916.**

**Arthur Leonard Brown****Herbert Frank Windsor**

26, Blount's Court Lodge, gardener, Herbert Frank Windsor, Potterne Wick, cowman, were appealed for by their employer, Mr. W. Stancomb, who has two acres of gardens and lawns, ten acres of grass, and has lost three men from his gardens by enlistment. - The Court decided that one of the men must go, and applicant said he would

rather retain Windsor, the elder of the two. Brown was given two months, and Windsor exempted.

**John Hand**

30, Park Cottage, head carter and cowman, appealed for by his employer, Mr. Robert Pottow, of Potterne Park Farm, as being the only carter on a farm of 400 acres, and who assisted in milking twice daily. - Conditional exemption.

**George Mitchell**

31, "Kings Arms," License holder, a time-expired Army man, appealed. - At the suggestion of Sir Horace McMahon, Mr. Mitchell expressed a preference that the case should be heard in the absence of the public. Prior to the closing of the doors, however, appellant said his case was an unique one owing to the kind of business he was in, and that he had offered himself for service in the Motor Transport months ago, he being well up in motors, and they would not take him. He had previously served in the Gloucester Regiment, and through the Boer War, leaving as a sergeant. - Exemption granted for two months. - Appellant intimated that he should take his case to the County authority.

**William Phillips**

**Charles Phillips**

brothers, were appealed for by their employer, Mr. Mark Few, of Lanborough Farm. These two men and Mr. Few run a farm and dairy, with occasional assistance at hay harvest. There were practically 50 head of cattle in milk, and only four men. - Both granted conditional exemption.

**John Albert Smith**

30, Stroud Green Farm, dairy farmer. - Exempted Conditionally.

**William Edward Smith**

27, saddler, High Street. His mum joined the Army Service Corps, and he has to carry on the work, serving a large number of farms, by himself. - Conditional exemption.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 25 March 1916.**

**Harry George Bond**

Abbotts Ball, Potterne, farmer – 40 acres. 10 milking cows, and milk walk in the village. A woman helps in the milk round. - Exempted.

**Herbert L. Burden**

29, The Butts, Potterne, carpenter, wheelwright, and smith. - Exempted

**William Burden**

36 Silver Street, Potterne, shoeing and general smith, employed by his brother, H.L. Burden. - Exempted.

**William Few**

31, Silver Street, Potterne, cowman, employed by Robert Harris, Butts House, Potterne. - Exempted for three months – until 30<sup>th</sup> June.

**Reginald Harry Jefferies**

27, Potterne Wick, carter, in the employ of Luke Marshment, Potterne Wick. - Exempted.

**George William Miller**

39, The Butts, Potterne, bricklayer and attendant to cattle and land, in the employ of his father, William Miller. - Mr. Miller, sen., is 75. Two men had joined the Army from this employ recently, and this was the only man left. - Conditional exemption till September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**James Newman**

Little Lanborough, Potterne, farmer – 15 acres, 6 milking cows. - Appellant who is a cripple, was exempted.

**John Mead**

Appeal from the Asylum.

39 Silver Street, Potterne, electric wireman. - Dr. Cole said the man was medically unfit, and handed in a certificate to that effect. - Exempted.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 1 April 1916.**

**Alfred John Bridewell**

37, head carter and milker, employed by Mr. Giles, of Potterne. - Exempted.

**Harry Maddick**

Wren Farm, Potterne, was appealed for by his brother. He is 27 years of age, and is employed by his father. There is another son at home. The father is unable to render any assistance. - Conditional exemption till September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Edward Pearce**

29, single, who was starred in the first instance, as carter, in the employ of Mr. Pottow, farmer, of Eastwell, Potterne, was now appealed for by his employer. There are 11 acres of arable land and 140 acres of pasture. One man is due to come up in a few days, and one man on the farm is a cripple. The point at issue was whether this farm was not better off for labour than some of the others in the district. There appeared to be some feeling in the parish about this case. - Exemption till June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 8 April 1916.**

**Arthur Leonard Brown**

Blount's Court Lodge, Potterne, gardener for Mr. W. Stancomb, had been given two months from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, to enable his employer to fill his place. The Military appealed against the two months. - Captain Morley said the man was a private cowman and gardener. Mr. Stancomb said since he was before the local Tribunal 150 men had left Potterne, and a great deal of allotment had been given up, which he was trying his best to get cultivated. This was the only man he had with the exception of a cowman. He would be losing six out of eight men, five of whom were married and all were young men, If this man were taken – he said nothing about pleasure grounds - he would here no one to look after 1½ acres of garden, and would be able to do nothing in the way of cultivating the seven or eight acres of allotment land which were thrown upon his hands. The only other man he had looked after the cows and 11 acres of land. - Captain Morley asked Mr. Stancomb if he had tried any women, and the latter replied that he had two of the best women to be got engaged in digging. More were not to be got. - Captain Morley informed the Court that he pressed the appeal, and the Court allowed it.

**Richard Pearce**

farmer, Five Lanes, Potterne, appealed. He is 36 years of age, and single, and the local Tribunal decided that as there was another brother and the father at home appellant should go. The brother is 34, and single, but had been medically rejected. - Captain Morley said they had not tried to get assistance. - Appeal dismissed. [see 29 April]

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 22 April 1916.**

**Richard Pearce**

We are asked to state that Mr. Richard Pearce, of Five Lanes, farmer, has no father, as was stated at the sitting of the County Tribunal when the Court sat a Devizes. The father died some 25 years ago.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 29 April 1916.**

**Frank Victor Giles**

of Whistley, was appealed for by his uncle, Mr. Giles. The lad is 19 in June. Mr. Giles said he had lost two out of four able-bodied men; one man was over 70 years of age. There were 60 milking cows. - Mr. Giles helped the Court with regard to a question as to how many cows a man might milk an hour. He ruled 15 out of the question altogether; 12 would be the outside number, and ten was quite enough, especially at this period of the year, when they are out to grass. Mr. Giles had no opinion of the milking machines, and Mr. Pottenger agreed. - Conditional exemption was granted.

**Edward Pearce**

Potterne, carter, single. 27, employed by Mr. Potter, who has 60 cows and four men, has until June 30<sup>th</sup>. [ see 24 June]

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 13 May 1916.**

**W. Alexander**

formerly keeper, was called, but the case was adjourned, as owing to a confusion of address the notice had not apparently reached him. It seemed a case of "Robert and Richard!". [see 27 May]

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 20 May 1916.**

**A. Jacobs**

of Potterne. The Chairman, dealing told Jacobs that he was called up for military service – and must go. - The appellant asked for a few weeks grace so that he might make up the new books which would be coming into force shortly, and which it would be difficult for a stranger to handle. - The Chairman, however, told him that that was in the interests of the Company, and not of the nation, consequently no time could be allowed.

**W. Alexander**

Mr. William Stancomb, of Blount's Court, Potterne, failed to convince the Tribunal as to the indispensability of W. Alexander, of Potterne Woods, formerly gamekeeper, but also now, as Mr. Stancomb is preserving no gamekeeper was exclusively employed on the land. The man is 33 years of age. - Mr. Stancomb said six out of eight men he had had gone into the Service, and he desired to retain the services of this man in order to try to keep some five or six acres of land in a reasonable state of cultivation so that they might be available for the men who had gone into the Army when they returned to civil life. The land was thrown upon his hands in consequence of the men who had gone having to give the allotments up. He had had two capable women employed, but in consequence of the last season being so bad for cleaning land, this had got into such a state that being so heavy, it was beyond the women

[discussion continues] Mr. Stancomb: If that is so I will withdraw it and have no more to do with it. Let him go I have tried to do my best, and I cannot do more. - The Chairman suggested that perhaps exemption till August 14<sup>th</sup> would meet the case. - The military representative said he should certainly oppose that. - Mr. Stancomb: I will withdraw it altogether. Let the man go. - The Chairman: Very well, that will settle it. - The appeal therefore came to noting.

**Thomas B. Crees**

of Cadley Farm, Potterne, was exempted without opposition.

**Henry Newman**

and Henry Newman, a milker, in the employment of Mr. Mark Butler, of Marsh Farm, Potterne, was exempted without opposition.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 27 May 1916.**

**Thomas B. Crees**

**Henry Newman**

Thomas B. Crees, of Cadley Farm, Potterne, and Henry Newman, a milker, in the employment of Mr. Mark Butler, of Marsh Farm, Potterne, were exempted without opposition. Mr. Butler said two of his sons were serving with the forces.

**Source: Devizes & Wilts Observer 1 June 1916.**

**Walter Robert Erwood**

38, The Crofts, Potterne, Small holder. - Conditional Exemption.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 3 June 1916.**

**William Few**

31, Potterne Butts was appealed for by Mr. Robert Harris, his employed. Mr Harris said he was practically incapacitated, as was also his wife, and Few was his only man to go with the horses. - Exempted until 14<sup>th</sup> July. - Mr. Medicott did not sit in this case. [see 15 July]

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 17 June 1916.**

**William Joseph Pullen**

farmer of Potterne, with eight children, appealed. He is over 40 years of age, and employed no labour on his 100 acre farm beyond his boys. - Conditional exemption.

**Walter Garrett**

millar, of Potterne, 40 years of age, with five children, the eldest of whom was eleven, asked for exemption. - The man was only passed for sedentary work and was given conditional exemption, the military acquiescing.

**Samuel Styles**

a bricklayer, Potterne, in the employ of Mr. Offer, of Devizes, with eight children and a delicate wife, was given conditional exemption. He did not attest because of his wife and family. - Conditional exemption.

**Edward Pearce**

a carter, 29, and single #, was appealed by his employer, Mr. Pottow, of Eastwell Farm, Potterne. Appellant only asked for time for the man to help over the hay making. He was given until July 30<sup>th</sup>, on the understanding that he would not be appealed for again.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 24 June 1916.**

**James Newman**

Mr. J. Anstee, farmer of Potterne, appealed for James Newman, a cowman, single, , and said if the man went he should give up. He had about an acre of arable land and 33 milking cows. He could get no women; the Chairman suggested that he might get some in Potterne, and Mr. Anstee said perhaps Mrs. Medicott would come and help him. The Chairman said he was afraid she was hardly up to it; he wished she were. - The appeal was refused. [see 22 July]

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 1 July 1916.**

**A. Fielding**

**Hedley J.T. Rawlings**

Thomas Crees, Cadley Farm, Potterne, appealed for A. Fielding and Hedley J.T. Rawlings, both of whom were indispensable, and they were conditional exempted. Mr. Crees said he had 60 cows, 50 in milk. One of the men has five children.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 8 July 1916.**

**William Few**

Potterne, cowman, etc., in the employ of Mr. Robert Harris (who is unable to work regularly in consequence of liability to illness, as certified by a medical man) was appealed for. The facts as stated by Mr. Harris were vouched for by the Chairman. There is only this man to milk twelve cows and go with the horses. He is passed for general service. - Exempted till September 30<sup>th</sup>. [ see 11 November]

**Fritz Wiltshire**

of Potterne, 25, farm labourer, etc., in the employ of Mr. Pottow, of Potterne Park Farm, was also unstarred, on the application of the military. There are 75 cows in full milk, together with a number of other stock. There are 400 acres, and 100 acres still to be cut. - Conditional exemption until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 15 July 1916.**

**James William Newman**

Mr. John Anstee, farmer of Potterne, appealed for James William Newman, of Lower Street, Potterne, his carter and cowman. The grounds of the appeal were that he was the only man on the farm who could cut the grass. Appellant had one old man, was subject to fits himself, and his medical man would not allow him to work the machinery. The local Tribunal dismissed the appeal on the ground that the man was not indispensable and should serve. - In reply to Captain Morley, the appellant said the man was 24 years of age and single. The area of the farm was 63 acres, all grass. - Lord Bath said there appeared to be plenty of labour on the farm. - Asked if he had tried any women, the appellant said he had had two; they milked one apiece while the others milked all the rest. He had not the women long: he could not put up with them. - The Chairman said the Court saw no reason to differ from the decision of the local Tribunal. The appeal was dismissed. The Court refused to grant any time.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 22 July 1916.**

**H.S. Wells**

motor driver, of Potterne, was again before the Court and he was given conditional exemption until 30<sup>th</sup> September

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 5 August 1916.**

**Leonard William Christopher**

aged 30, gamekeeper to Mr. R.G. Gwatkin, of the Manor House, Potterne, was refused exemption

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 12 August 1916.**

**Arthur Staples**

38, cowman, of Potterne, who had been rejected as medically unfit. - The Chairman: If he is no good we don't want him (laughter).

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 2 September 1916.**

**J. Maddick**

26, single cowman, Whur Farm, Potterne, was exempted till October 30<sup>th</sup>. There is a brother on the farm of military age, who, however is married. The appellant in this case expressed the hope that in the meantime the Tribunal would give his brother exemption, as he, being single considered that it was his duty to go if either of them had to.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 30 September 1916.**

**George William Miller**

Mr. Miller, of Potterne, asked for conditional exemption for his son, George William, the manager of his father's building business. - Applicant said he had six head of cattle and three acres of root crops. He could not do the work himself because of an injury resulting from an accident. The man was passed for garrison duty at home. The son had seven acres of land. He is 39 years of age, and lived at The Butts, Potterne. - Exempted until December 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Herbert John Shergold**

Mr. W. Stancomb, of Blount's Court, appealed on behalf of Herbert John Shergold, 22, married, with one child. The man acted as chauffeur, helps in the garden, makes the gas for use in the house, looks after the cars, and drives. He has been medically rejected three times, and on the strength of this he married. He now lives at the lodge. He has passed for garrison duty at home. Mr. Stancomb said he had already lost two chauffeurs and seven men out of eight on his estate. - December 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 21 October 1916.**

**William Few**

32, married, cowman and carter, in the service of Mr. R. Harris, Potterne. - Conditional exemption.

**James Staples**

40, single, cattleman, employed by Mr. Robert Pottow, Park Farm, Potterne, passed for garrison service at home. There is a running dairy of 90 cows, with many head of young stock. The military agreed that Mr. Pottow was under staffed. - Conditional exemption until April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 11 November 1916.**

**OPC Note:** Not everyone in Britain supported the war, however, and not everyone welcomed conscription. The Military Service Acts put in place a national system of local tribunals to which conscripts could appeal for exemption from service. Among the grounds for exemption, along with hardship, illness, education and the essential nature of their work, men could also claim on grounds of a conscientious objection to military service.