



Rowde 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.

John Bushell

Messrs. Wilson and Son, of Foxhangers Laundry, appealed on behalf of Mr. John Bushell, Caen Hill, a motor-driver. The man had been put back eight groups on a former occasion, to enable the applicants to get another man or to teach another driver. - Mrs. Wilson said she had tried to get another man; she had had three, two of them could not drive, and the third was not suitable. - The applicant was told that there were drivers to be got who would come to Devizes, but Mrs. Wilson gave concrete instances of her failures. - She was told that the applicant would probably have to go and that she must continue to try all she could to get another man. - The military authorities consented to a further postponement for 10 groups. - Exemption was granted for a month from Thursday.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 26 February 1916.

Edwin Butler

18, Rowdecroft Farm, milker and worker on the farm, employed by his mother. The military authorities opposed the application, which was refused. Mrs. Butler said she should be very sorry to see her son go. [see 8 July]

Robert Moss

24, The Bakery, master baker, employing female labour. - Conditional exemption.

Jasper Jubilee Webb

28, High Street, market gardener, employed by Miss Russell, as milkman, applied on domestic grounds. - Two months. Webb has two brothers serving and one is an invalid. [also see 20 May]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 18 March 1916.

William Watts Buckland

39, Lower Foxhangers Farm, farmer. - Exemption was already granted under a new process in this case.

Albert Ernest Giles

29, Lower Durllett Farm, Rowde, working farmer. - Exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 25 March 1916.

Thomas Fielding

who had been granted a certificate of conditional exemption as a farmer, was appealed against by the military authorities. He said he was willing to go. - The Chairman: You will make a good soldier, too.

Mark Butler

Mrs Butler, of Rowde Croft Farm, appeared on behalf of her son, Mark Butler, aged 23, who was previously exempted. The Chairman said the age now was 25, below which no one could be exempted, and the man must go. There are three single sons and two daughters at home. None of the sons is serving. - The Chairman: He must go, that's all there is about it.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 8 April 1916.

Arthur John Giles

working farmer, Lower Durllett Farm, Rowde, had been given a month which had expired, and the military had appealed. He is 26, single, and worked the farm with his brother, who was conditionally exempted. They had 105 acres of land and 27 milking cows, besides heifers, horses, etc. They had no cottage on the farm, and that increased the difficulty of getting labour. - Mr. Stratton, having examined the respondent asked for time, long enough to get in the hay harvest. - Given until July 30th.

Albert Wheeler

milker and general farm labourer, of Close Lane, Rowde, in the employ of Mr. A, Taylor, of the Manor Farm, was appealed against by the military. He is married. - Mr. Taylor said four of his men are now with the Colours. He had advertised for women, but with no result. - The local Tribunal had given temporary exemption. Wheeler is married, with three children. - Mr. Stratton pressed for the retention of this man. - The Court having deliberated in private, the Chairman said it was a question of principle, and the military appeal would be allowed. This would probably not make much difference in this case, as the group in which Wheeler was placed would not be called up for some time, probably. But he desired to say that though in ordinary peace times a certain standard of labour might be right and reasonable, these were not normal peace times; the Tribunal felt that it was absolutely necessary that every effort should be made to substitute eligible men by others who were not eligible for military service. [continues].

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 22 April 1916.

Mark Butler**Edwin Butler**

23, cowman, and Edwin Butler, 18, milkman, of Rowde, were applied for by their mother, who has another son, aged 20, at home, and two daughters, aged 21 and 15. Neither of these, could milk. - The Tribunal decided that Mark should go and Edwin was allowed until June 14th, the case of the other son to be looked up. [see 17 June]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 13 May 1916.

Jasper Jubilee Webb

28, single, market gardener, appealed for exemption on domestic grounds. He has two brothers serving. There is a brother who is subject to fits, and applicant was anxious as to his future. - The Chairman: Well, you will have to go. Someone will look after your brother all right. The nation requires you more than anyone else does. You must go.

W, Giles

carter and milker, employed by Mr. Wiltshire of Smethwick Farm. Was appealed. Mr. Wiltshire farms 200 acres of land, and three sons out of four have gone to the war. - Conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 20 May 1916.

Edwin Butler

of Rowdecroft Farm, described as a cowman, was again appealed for by his mother, who employs him. He is 19 years of age. The appellant had taken this case to the County Appeals Committee on 10th May, and under the regulations which now operate it could not be heard again by the local Court. It was accordingly dismissed, the appellant being informed that he course now was to appeal to the County Committee against its decision. [see 8 July]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 17 June 1916.

John Sims

39, of Rowde, a shepherd, in the employ of Mr. D.W. Butler, was appealed for. - The man has nine children, and the military did not oppose the appeal. - It being a certified trade, and, as Mr. Maggs said, he "having done and still doing a good service," he was given conditional exemption.

Charles Plank

29, a carter, also in Mr. Butler's employ at Rowde, with nine horses to look after, was likewise conditionally exempted with the consent of the military.

Arthur George Harford

carter, of Rowde, 36, was appealed for by Mr. John Harford, of Wick Farm, Rowde, the man's father, who employs him. The farm was 70 acres, 30 acres of which was arable. They had more work than they could do, and he (the father) was unable to do anything. - Conditional exemption.

Albert Ferris

small-holder of Rowde, aged 30, appealed for himself. He has three acres of arable land and eleven of pasture. He had the land about three or four years ago, He was until a short time ago in partial employment of Mr. Giddings, of Devizes, as a motor-driver. He did not attest because he thought his place was at home. - Mr. Nicholson said the military point of view was that the man had changed his occupation so recently. - The appellant said his father could not look after the land and milk his cows. Appellant is married, but has no children. - The Court refused the appeal, the man being told he was not indispensable, and would have to serve.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 24 June 1916.

Frank Henry Brickley

34, farmer, of Rowde Common, appealed for exemption. He is single handed and has 24 head of cattle. Conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 1 July 1916.

Edwin Butler

Rowdecroft Farm, cowman, 19, appealed for a renewal of his certificate. It was dealt with originally at Devizes on May 16th. There are three brothers. This man had been given until June 14th. - The facts have already been

reported. - One brother is given conditional exemption, and another has joined up. - There are 90 acres of grass and six of arable. Mrs. Butler has two daughters at home, 21 and 15 years of age. - In reply to Mr. Withy, Mrs Butler said there were no changes in the circumstances since was at the Tribunal before. They had not started cutting the hay yet; she did not know when they were going to do so; she thought they might start that day. - Mr. Stratton said we had had a most unfortunate June; we were a month behind and he did not blame anyone for not beginning haymaking. - The local Tribunal had refused exemption in this case. - Captain Morley said their view , and that of the Advisory Committee was that there were three sons, and two of them should go. - Exemption was given until end of July. - Captain Morley asked if this was final?. - The Chairman said they recognised that the weather had been very unfavourable. - Captain Morley pointed out that Mrs Butler had gone a fortnight over the time she had been given. She must not be allowed to go on wasting fortnights in this way. - The Chairman: She will have until the end of July so that her son may help with the crops. [see 5 August]

William Bryant

40 years 7 months, engine attendant, milker etc., in the employ of Mr. Tayler, of Rowde, was granted conditional exemption.

G.H. Golding

of Rowde, a thatcher, appealed and was given exemption, largely on account of his proximity to the age limit, and his long family. He has eight children under 16 years of age and three above it.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 8 July 1916.

E. Mitchell

Milker , etc., in the employ of Mr. W. Tayler of Rowde, 37, was appealed for, Five men have been lost from the farm. There are 80 cows – 60 in milk, three men and a boy having to milk these. The man is pass for garrison duty abroad, but he cannot be called up until October 1st, because he was originally rejected as unfit. - The case was adjourned

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 15 July 1916.

Edwin Butler

on Saturday, Rowdecroft Farm, described as a cowman, was again appealed for by his mother for an extension of his exemption. The case had been before the Court on two previous occasions in May and on the 1st July. - Miss Butler appeared. The lad is 19 and single. The reason of the appeal was that one son being in the Army, there eas not enough labour to finish the hay making.- In reply to Captain Morley, Miss Butler said her mother had been to the Court twice, but she was now ill, and the doctor advised her to remain in bed. She added that there were three brothers; one (Mark) had gone and another (Fred) was exempted. - Captain Morley said the local Tribunal thought two of the three sons should go. - Miss Butler said she thought there were 25 cows in milk; she helped to milk morning and evening; they all helped. There were only six acres of arable land. The lad had not been examined by the Medical Board. - Adjourned till today (Saturday) for examination, the Chairman saying that a member of the Tribunal had a note that the lad was ordered to be medically examined before. - Mr. Stratton did not press the case; he said he left it in the hands of the Court.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 5 August 1916.

Ernest F. Butler

20, single, of Rowde Croft Farm, whose two brothers have joined up, and who works for his mother, was given conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 2 September 1916.

Henry James Miles

28, married, with three children, cowman, in the employ of Mr. Pottow of Caen Hill, had passed for general service. - Mr. Pottow explained his position, and showed what a lot of hard work there is to be done with a herd which has to spend a good deal of its existence in a yard. - November 30th, [see 2 September]

Reginald Stiles**William Cyril Stiles**

Mrs Stiles, of Myrtle Farm, Rowde, appealed for her sons, Reginald, 20, and William Cyril, 18. The elder was given conditional exemption and the younger till October 30th. [see 30 September]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 9 September 1916.

William Cyril Stiles

The military appealed against the decision of the Devizes Rural Tribunal in the case of William Cyril Stiles, farm assistant to his mother, who lives at Myrtle Farm, Rowde. He is 19 and single, and has passed for general service. The local Tribunal had given until October 30th, but had not made it final. One son is in the Yeomanry in France, and there is another (who is 20 years of age, and has passed for garrison service), at home, with conditional exemption. There is also a daughter at home. The decision of the local Tribunal was varied, and it was ordered that the young man should join up on October 14th, this to be final.

James Henry Miles

The military appealed against the decision of the Devizes Rural Tribunal in the case of James Henry Miles, cowman, in the employ of Mr. Pottow, of Caen Hill. The man is 28, married, with three children and has passed for general service. The local Tribunal had given until the 30th of November. Mr. Pottow has just over 100 acres, all grass, and milk 40 cows: there are also five dry ones, some young stock, and four horses. He has two men and a lad of 14 (including Miles). - The Tribunal decided to let the local decision stand.

Ethelbert Mitchell

37, married, was appealed for by Mr. W. Taylor, Manor Farm, Rowde, as milker. - Conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 30 September 1916.

George Herbert Moss

valet, of Rowdeford, gave notice of appeal, but did not appear to prosecute it. It was accordingly dismissed.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 7 October 1916.

Herbert R. Crouch

single, employed as cowman by Mr. Buckland, Lower Foxhangers Farm. In this case it was stated that there are 5 milkers (two of them women) for 43 cows. - Mr. Buckland said he should have to get rid of some of the cows. - He was told the man would not be taken until April 1st, unless he was substituted meanwhile. - Exempted until end of the year.

William Thomas Mallam

29, single, garrison service at home, in partnership, at Potterne. No further appeal without leave. - Exempted until end of year.

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.