

Cellardyke in WW1

At the outbreak of the First World War the population of Cellardyke was nearly 3000, double that of Anstruther. As might be expected fishing dominated economic and social life. Of the of the 64 steam drifters in the East Fife district, 37 were manned by Cellardyke crews. When war broke out this all changed. Fishing was severely restricted; businesses closed.



The local drifters were requisitioned by the Admiralty for minesweeping or anti submarine patrol duties. (One of these, the *Craignoon*, was sunk in the Adriatic.) And the men went with them. From Cellardyke over 100 fishermen had joined up by October 1914. Over two thirds of Scotland's fishermen served in the war.

CELLARDYKE FISHERMEN AND THE WAR.

A large meeting of fishermen was held yesterday in Cellardyke Town Hall to consider as to whether any steps could be taken to utilise the steam drifters, which would give employment to the fishermen whose ordinary occupation has been interrupted by the war. The men were addressed by Sir Ralph Anstruther of Balcaskie and Mr H. T. Anstruther, ex-M.P. for St Andrews Burghs.

Mr Anstruther submitted communications from the Admiralty to the effect that at the present the steam drifters could not be utilised for defensive purposes. Mr Anstruther submitted details of the terms of service in the Royal Naval Reserve, and about 30 young fishermen indicated that they were prepared to join this force.

18th Aug 1914

Letter <i>DA</i> Number <i>6246</i>		Town and County where Born	Name of Father and Mother	Date of Birth	Height	Complexion	Personal Marks	Primary Purpose of
Name <i>Anderson Charles</i>		<i>Cellardyke Fife</i>	<i>James Anderson</i>	<i>25/1/80</i>	<i>5 ft 4 in</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Walter Wilson & Sons House</i>	<i>Wallington</i>
Date of Enrolment		Particulars of Travelling Warrants, &c., from Training	Particulars of Expenses to Training, &c.	DATE OF ENROLMENT	DAY OF	MONTH	YEAR	EMPLOYMENT—R. V. 17
<i>10.4.1915</i>		<i>10.4.1915</i>	<i>10.4.1915</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>1915</i>	<i>10</i>
REMARKS		<p><i>The first retainer payable on this Certificate will be for the</i></p>						

Charles Anderson's papers

Many did not come back of course.

On the Cellardyke war memorial there are 62 names of which 22 are on the navy panel – some 35 % of the Cellardyke men who died 1914-1919. Yet across the UK as a whole naval casualties accounted for fewer than 5% of deaths. So our experience is quite different from that of most communities.

Very few fishermen joined the Army. The many Cellardyke men who did so worked in ancillary occupations like the local oilskin factories, cooperages, or roperies. Others who died in army ranks, worked in Anstruther, like the young apprentice plumbers and printers were killed. There were students away at university and men who had emigrated, leaving their parents behind to mourn their loss in Australian and Canadian ranks.

Died.
Second-Lieut. Thomas Smith (22), Royal Scots, eldest son of Mr Wm. Smith, fisherman, Cellardyke—died a prisoner of war in Germany.
Stoker Wm. Tarvit (23), R.N.V.R., second son of Mr James Tarvit, Shorehead, Cellardyke—died of consumption.

16 Oct 1918

CELLARDYKE SAILOR DIES OF INFLUENZA.
Seaman Robert Thomson, son of the late Mr Alexander Thomson, fisherman, Cellardyke, has died in Plymouth Hospital of influenza.
Seaman Thomson, who was only home on leave a fortnight ago, who a recorder in the Admiralty service when war broke out, and at once joined up as a seaman in an auxiliary cruiser.
He was 35 years of age, and leaves a widow and one child.
A brother of deceased's, Lance-Corporal John Thomson, A. and S. Highlanders, died of wounds on 9th June of this year, while the father, Mr Alexander Thomson, died from heart trouble on the 19th of the same month. Other two sons of this family are now on active service.

22nd Oct 1918

ANOTHER CELLARDYKE MAN KILLED IN ACTION.
Lance-Corporal John Moncrieff, Seaforth Highlanders, second son of the late Mr John Moncrieff, fisherman, George Street, Cellardyke, was killed in action on the 1st inst.
The lance-corporal was 28 years of age. After serving his apprenticeship as a cooper with Messrs Melville & Co., Cellardyke, he worked at South Shields. Shortly after war was declared he enlisted in the Seaforths.
After being wounded in action, and undergoing treatment in a base hospital, Private James Birrell, Black Watch, son of Mr John Birrell (Tarvit), fisherman, Cellardyke, has been home as a convalescent.

20th July 1916

CELLARDYKE MAN FALLS IN ACTION.
Official confirmation has been received of the death of Private Alex. Boyter, Black Watch, Cellardyke.
Private Boyter, who was 22 years of age, was the third son of Mrs Boyter, Rodger Street, Cellardyke, and prior to enlistment two years ago was a plasterer in the employment of Mr Williamson, Cellardyke.

21st Nov 1916

THREE CELLARDYKE TERRITORIALS WOUNDED.
Information has been received that Lance-Corporal W. Anderson, 7th Black Watch, James Street, Cellardyke, has been wounded in the head, and is in hospital at Boulogne.
Private Adam Lowrie, Shore Street, Cellardyke, of the same Company, has received a wound in the left arm.
Private Alex. Boyter, another comrade, has sustained severe wounds in the face, and is now in Birmingham Hospital.

5th June 1915