

## Peace at Last 1918: Joy and Sorrow

Our new display looks at the different lives which awaited people at the end of World War I and is part of the 'Cuckfield Remembers 1918-2018' commemoration this autumn. From the joy of families welcoming their returning men: we have the Welcome Home dinner menu featuring every type of roast meat and Christmas puddings, and this was in April! To the comrades' fishing outing, all dressed up for the occasion.



Welcome Home Dinner menu, April 1919



Glove making. May Botting on the left, Mrs Wells on the right

Welcome Home Dinner menu, April 1919  
Mrs Wells on the right

Glove making. May Botting on the left,



James O'Grady (centre) in the Russian Duma,  
April 1917

This contrasted with the life of the newly widowed May Botting who needed to support herself financially and worked with her mother, Mrs Wells, and a circle of Cuckfield women making gloves. And the life of Alphaeus Arnold, blinded while fighting in France, and one of the first men to be admitted to St Dunstan's, the charity which supported those with visual injuries. We have his braille watch with no glass so the face is read by touch. And we have discovered a surprising Russian connection in Cuckfield with two families involved in events surrounding the Russian Revolution of 1917: Diana Giles' grandfather, James O'Grady, was Chairman of the National Federation of Trades Unions and a Labour MP. He went to Petrograd after the overthrow of the Czar in March 1917 to persuade the moderate Revolutionary government to remain in the War.

Neville Blunden's father, Joseph, falsified his age and was sent at the age of 17 to Russia during the Civil War which followed the Revolution of October 1917. He was supplying the White Russian cause as part of the Army Service Corps and was awarded a medal bearing the Czar's head.