



Worton 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.

George Phillips

Ralph Harding, Manor Farm, Marston, applied on behalf of Mr. George Phillips, head cowman, of Worton. The military opposed the application. There were some 80 head of cattle on the farm; there were 50 cows, and only two men to look after them. They used a milking machine, and this man was the only man who understood it. He had been in his employment for five years. - Sir Horace McMahon said the military authorities opposed the application on the ground that it was not in the national interest that the man should remain in his present occupation. He only had two milkers, including this man. It was a cheese farm, and they would be using the machine for milking in April. - Exemption granted for three months.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 26 February 1916.

Herbert Owen Few

of Worton, was exempted on the ground of his agricultural pursuits. He farms 40 acres, and keeps 12 cows, which he milks himself. [see 17 June]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 11 March 1916.

Frederick Bridewell

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

Lionel Few

22, working bailiff for Mrs Musselwhite, was ordered to serve. Appellant said he should appeal; it was not fair play. - The Chairman told him that he was quite at liberty to do so.

Henry Watson Norris

36, farm labourer, employed by Mr. Thomas Sloper, Woodbridge Mill, West Lavington, appealed on family grounds. This case was dismissed on a previous hearing and now came up for review. The Rev. H.B. Campbell appeared in support of the appeal. - The Charman said they did not know at the time how absolutely dependent upon the

appellant were the widowed mother and his afflicted brother. - Mr. Campbell said he appeared because of the local feeling there was about the case. No one could be found to look after the mother and brother. - Three months' exemption, the applicant being told that he must try to find someone to look after his mother and brother. He was willing to go, he said, if some one could be found to look after the home.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 18 March 1916.

Albert Ford

23, 4 Prospect Terrace, Worton, cowman, was appealed for by his employer, Mr. John Cox, of Marsh Farm. - Mr. Cox said he had 45 cows in milk and only two men and a boy to milk them. - Six months.

Arthur William Goss

28, The Forge, Worton, shoeing smith (certified occupation) . -Conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 25 March 1916.

William Phillips

Worton, milker, employed by Mr. Few, had received conditional exemption , and the military appealed. Mr. Few said the man looked after the engine for cutting roots, etc., for cattle. There were 49 milking cows, 42 in milk. The man is 32, and married and a brother and boy work on the farm besides this man. - It appeared that information had been received since the local Tribunal gave exemption, which rather altered matters, and an appeal was entered as soon as this was discovered. - Mr. Stratton said it would be pinching the labour to take the man away, but he would not press it. - Three months allowed. [see 22 July]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 22 April 1916.

Charles John Sumner

a miller's carter of Worton, was appealed for by Mr. Sloper, who lives near Lavington Station. Mr. Sloper said he had two businesses and a farm. Sumner was the only man who could be relied upon to go with the horses. - Conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 6 May 1916.

Herbert Owen Few

The military authorities asked the Tribunal to review the case of Herbert Owen Few, a farm manager, of Worton, who was granted a certificate conditionally exempting him from military service on the 9th March. After hearing the evidence, the Court revoked the certificate, which leaves Few in the position of an uncalled man. [see 8 July]

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 17 June 1916.

Herbert Owen Few

Worton, appealed against the decision of the Devizes Rural Tribunal, who refused him any exemption. He is 26 years of age, and single. He has a father and a brother aged 17 years. The size of the holding is 40 acres. The local Tribunal adjourned the case from June 2nd to June 6th, for the production of the agreement under which the appellant held the farm, but it was not produced. In the course of his written appeal, the appellant said the farm was his. The local Tribunal would not allow him any time, as it thought a brother might do the work and the father. Mr. Stephen Fox, who had just given up the farm, might supervise it; but he (appellant) refused to allow either of them to interfere with his business or to trespass upon his land. Asked why he said that, the man said he did so

because his brother was no good to him. The Chairman: The point is the country is in great need of young men: you are 26 years of age – just the age to go to help her in her necessity and you have your father and brother at home. [the inquisition continues].

The Chairman: The Tribunal is quite agreed upon the appeal. It must be dismissed, and the decision of the local Tribunal upheld. His Lordship added that this was one of the weakest cases the Court had had before it.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 8 July 1916.

William Phillips

milker, of Worton, appealed for a renewal of his certificate. The man is 33, and married. Temporary exemption had been given till July 14th. The employer, Mr. Few, said he had 60 acres of hay to make, and could not get labour. The farm is 125 acres in extent, 10 being arable. There are 45 cows in milk, and two men and a boy, with one or two men helping for the hay making. When before the local Tribunal he omitted to say that Oliver Few helped him: he would only come when he liked. The farm was a mile and a half from the village, and he could not get women to help. His wife did not help to milk, she was not well. - Mr. Bell: It is an extraordinary thing that none of the farmers' wives are in good health (laughter). - in reply to Mr. Stratton, Mr. few said he still had over 60 acres of grass to cut: they had not been able to get on very well because of the weather. - Exempted until September 30th.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 22 July 1916.

Alfred Ford

23, married (officially single), Worton Common, was appealed for by Mr. John Cox, Marsh Farm, who employs him as cowman. - Conditional exemption.

E.J. Holloway

40, master wheelwright, New Tree Villa, Worton. - Conditional exemption.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 30 September 1916.

Harry Few

Mr. Holloway, wheelwright, etc., of Worton, appealed for Harry Few, 38 years of age, a bricklayer and a general jobbing hand in his employ. Few is passed for labour abroad, and as much of his present work was in connection with the repair of the farm buildings and cottage property, Mr. Holloway held that the man is more usefully employed where he is. Mr. Holloway said he had five men of military age, three of whom were rejected for service. - December 30th. - It was stated that an appeal was entered on personal grounds at Westbury. And that the man was told it would be referred to the Devizes Court. - It was pointed out, however, that the man lives at Westbury the appeal would in the ordinary course have to be heard at that place. As he had been given until the end of the year on the employers appeal, the man was advised not to proceed with the other string to his bow for the present.

Herbert Maslen

Mr. A.W. Goss, the village blacksmith, of Worton, appealed on behalf of his man Herbert Maslen, who has passed for general service. He tried originally for the Wiltshire Yeomanry, but did not pass. - 30th November, final.

Source: Wiltshire Telegraph 21 October 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.