

## END OF THE WAR – 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1918

The end of the First World War came on 11 November 1918 when an Armistice was signed in a railway carriage at Compiègne in Northern France.

The British public were notified of the end of the war by a communiqué issued from the Press Bureau that “an armistice was signed at five o’clock this morning, and hostilities are to cease on all fronts at 11 a.m. to-day”

So it was that at 11am on 11 November 1918—“the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month” – a ceasefire came into effect which ended the war which was supposedly to end all wars.

In many places along the front there was fighting right up to the eleventh hour to ensure as much territory as possible was gained.

When the hour came there was some muted cheering and applause, but most of the combatants felt only emptiness and weariness.

However back in Britain there were scenes of jubilation, particularly in London where people rushed onto the streets shouting “war is over”. All over Britain the church bells were rung.

Whether their towns and cities rejoiced noisily as in London or with quiet dignity, the whole of Britain heaved a collective sigh of relief that the so-called Great War was at an end.

## THE END OF THE WAR – KELSO

The news that so many people had waited for came finally to Kelso, early in the forenoon. Because there had been a “false alarm” the previous Thursday, people were somewhat suspicious as to whether the news was actually true.

When the Edinburgh evening papers arrived there was a rush on the newsagent’s shops and it was noted that little attempt was made to obscure window lights.

Now that the news had been received, the people of Kelso and all around the world had to start to rebuild their shattered lives and also find a way to commemorate the dead with a fitting tribute.



Courtesy of Christine Henderson

*“The official notice of enemy’s acceptance of Armistice terms was late in reaching Kelso and a number of people from the country district waited anxiously for some time. A notice was put up at the Post Office and shortly thereafter Provost Stevenson, who has been an influenza victim, had a signed intimation put up at the Town Hall.*

*The town bells pealed merrily for the first time since early in the war, and the suspended clock chimes have since been resumed. Church bells joined in the note of thanksgiving and flags were speedily run up at a number of the principal buildings while amongst the school children, now on holiday, there was a big demand for smaller flags of the Allies.*

*On the whole however, there was a certain restraint in the manifestations of joy owing to the ravages of the influenza fiend, while sympathy could not be withheld from the “dowie” households whose loved ones lie in far away soldiers graves and will not be among the boys when they come marching home. The consolation is that fighting gallantly for the honour of their native land they have not died in vain”*

Extract from Kelso Chronicle 14th November 1918