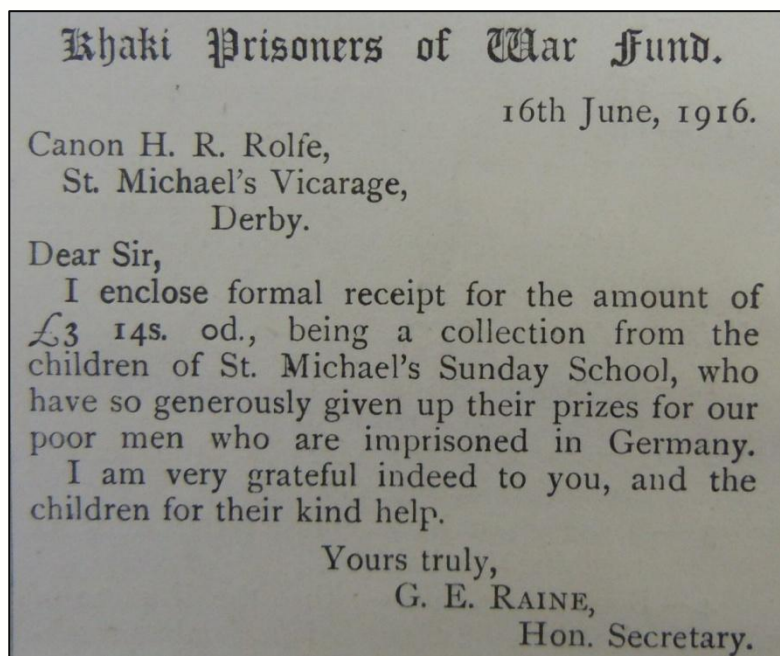




# Local Children in World War One

Children's organisations within churches played their part in the war effort. As the letter below from St Michael's Church Magazine shows, children gave up their Sunday School prizes for the war effort. This may not have been such a loss as the children were given "improving" books which were usually densely printed with very few pictures!

Scout troops struggled to find suitable leaders as men were called up to serve at the front. At a recruitment drive on 17 August 1915 organised by the Sherwood Foresters in Derby it was announced by the District Commissioner (Alderman Bemrose) that 150 of the 500 scouts in the town had already enlisted.



A boy scout working as a military despatch cyclist during the First World War. © IWM (Q 30596)

At St Michael's Church (Queen Street) the Boy Scouts helped with welcoming soldiers during February 1916 when the church rooms were used temporarily as recreation rooms for 3/5<sup>th</sup> South Staffordshire Regiment. Boy Scouts, Boy's Life Brigade and Boy's Brigade also collected newspapers for recycling – by October 1914 the Derby Daily Telegraph reported they had already recycled 3 tons of paper which involved calling at 300 homes each week.

Boy Scouts and Girl Guides helped with flag day collections for charities associated with the war effort. It was a hobby, particularly amongst teenage girls, to collect and keep the little paper, metal or fabric flags. All these examples have been preserved in the Imperial War Museum. Images © IWM Access





## Local Children in World War One (cont.)

St Alkmund's Church formed Boy Scout and Girl Guide companies at the beginning of the war.

A Girl Guide Troop was formed at St Michael's Church in January 1918, followed by a Brownie pack in April 1918. Badge work centred around home nursing, housekeeping and sewing and a badge called "Ambulance".

The church magazine reported "some very useful war service work has been done [by the guides] at Temple House Hospital on two evenings a week since July". Temple House on Mill Hill Lane was run by the Order of St John as an Auxiliary Hospital.



Girl Guides pull a cart full of materials to be delivered to the Red Cross workers at their homes, United Kingdom.  
© IWM (Q 27902)

## Patriotism or Pocket Money?

In Autumn 1917 the Munitions industry started to run short of Acetone which was used to make Cordite – the explosive part of shells. It was found that acetone could be made by fermenting horse chestnuts and a letter was sent around to schools enlisting the help of school children and boy scouts to collect conkers for the war effort. The appeal was so successful that tons of conkers were left rotting at the designated collection points – children were paid 7s 6d for each hundredweight they collected - that's approximately £23 in modern money for 50kg.



Our local collection point was at Parkfields Cedars Girls' School (now the Resources Centre on Kedleston Road). The school opened in 1917 having moved from Abbey Street. (Courtesy of Marshall, Keene and Co and [www.picturethepast.org.uk](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk))

For further information and pictures: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/25307614>