

Conscription

In 1911 the population of England and Wales was 36 million according to the census, with the population of Chaddesden being 307 males and 279 females. The breakdown of the males living at this time in Chaddesden shows that there were:

Under 10	63
10-19	60
20-29	51
30-39	46
40-49	29
50-59	41
>60	17

In 1914 the British Army had approximately 710,000 men at its disposal; all were volunteers.

In August 1914 the British Government called for an extra 100,000 volunteer soldiers to come forward. At the time Lord Kitchener was the Secretary of State for War and a major publicity campaign was started.

They got 750,000 men by the end of September, and by January 1915 more than 1 million had joined the armed forces voluntarily. This meant that women and children had to take over the jobs carried out by men.

By mid-1915 volunteer numbers were falling fast and the National Registration Act was created. It was a list of all the men fit for military service who were still available.

Conscription was introduced in January 1916, targeting single men aged 18-41. Within a few months World War 1 conscription was rolled out for married men.

Men who got called up for service could appeal to a local Military Service Tribunal. Reasons included health, already doing important war work or moral or religious reasons. The last group became known as the Conscientious Objectors.

750,000 men appealed against their conscription in the first 6 months. Most were granted exemption of some sort, even if it was only temporary.

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