

STRAND MAGAZINE

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Strand Magazine

I was clearing out an old cupboard which hadn't been used for ages – I needed the space for newer things – when I found an old copy of the Strand Magazine dated November 1915. I had not seen it before and I wondered where it had come from. Then a notice at the top of its front cover gave me a clue.

I only knew one of my grandparents, my paternal grandfather. The other three had died before I was born.. My maternal grandfather was the regimental sergeant major in the Staffordshire Regiment. He saw action in the Boar War and the first German War where he developed rheumatoid arthritis in the trenches. He died in 1932. George, my paternal grandfather was born in 1880 and died in 1950. He was a carpenter and decorator, but was in the army during the first German War.

This Strand Magazine was priced at 6 pence (2.5 P), quite an amount in those days. The notice at the top of its front cover read: 'Hand this magazine "For the troops" over the counter at any post office without postage or address and it will reach some soldier or sailor at Home or Abroad.'

The old cupboard had belonged to George and I realised that the magazine must have been given to him as a war soldier and that he had kept it in this cupboard. Having been born, bred and lived in Plymouth until he joined the army for the war, George would not have known of the Strand Magazine until he received it when someone donated it through the Post office. I was now reading what he had read at the end of November 1915 or in 1916, 106 years ago. Incredible! What I found the most fascinating were the old advertisements in it; His Master's Voice records, Wright's coal tar soap, Remington typewriters, Vaseline, the City Suit at 47/- (£2.35) , Ingersoll pocket watch 5/- (25P) and for Marshall and Snelgrove department store where I worked in the early 1960s.

As shown on the front page, the featured story ridiculed: "Germany's War Medal – the Hun as a Champion Braggart!"

I thought how good and interesting the advertisements were then compared with those of today, especially the horrible commercials with their false statements on current television.