

SOLDIERS' SMALL BOOK
NEWSLETTER OF THE
VICTORIAN MILITARY SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER 2011 – ISSUE No. 90

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

There is a lot in this issue, so I will just thank all of the contributors and say I hope you enjoy it.

SOCIETY'S CHANGE OF ADDRESS – IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ALL MEMBERS

Due to the ever increasing costs of keeping it open, the Council has decided to close the Society's PO Box with effect from the end of November 2011.

After that date, if you wish to contact the Society, please write or email to the relevant address given at the back of *Soldiers of the Queen* or, if you prefer, use the email link on the Society's website www.victorianmilitarysociety.org.uk.

RORKE'S DRIFT HOTEL

Charles Aikenhead who owns the Rorke's Drift Hotel in South Africa is a member of the Society and has generously offered an introductory discount for VMS members. Details can be found on the hotel's website at www.rorkesdrifhotel.com.

Charles also says that he is keen to add to the hotel's Victorian flavour and the picture in the last issue of *Drill Movements of the Victorian Army* is now on the walls to add a piece of period humour. If any members have some good period pictures, and would be willing to send Charles a digital copy, he would be glad to hear from you at c.aikenhead@virgin.net.

If you want to stay there, the hotel's address is Rorke's Drift Hotel, PO Box 539 Dundee 3000, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Email www.rorkesdrifhotel.com.

If you want to find it on a map or Google earth it is at 28 deg 20'.58S 30 deg 32'.38E.

BOOK FAIR & TALK

The Royal Logistic Corps Museum will be holding its popular annual military book fair on Saturday 12 November 2011 at the Museum, Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut, Camberley, Surrey GU16 6RW. The RLC Museum is easily accessible by car from the M3 and the Museum is well signposted. In addition, there is a free car park.

If you prefer public transport, a bus service connects Brookwood Station (South West Trains - London Waterloo to Southampton main line) with the museum.

The Fair will be open from 10am to 4 pm and admission is free.

One of the features of the Museum's book fairs is that there are speakers giving talks in the morning and afternoon. This year, the Editor has been asked to speak and will be giving two talks on "The Pig War" – a very strange incident in the 1850s when Britain and the USA nearly went to war over a pig and also on "Women and the Victorian Army"

NEW BOOK (1)

On Afghanistan's Plains: The Story of Britain's Afghan Wars by Jules Stewart with a foreword by General Sir David Richards. Hardback. 272 pages. Published by I B Tauris & Co.

The Publishers say: "*Britain's military involvement in Afghanistan is a contentious subject, yet it is often forgotten that the current conflict is in fact the fourth in a string of such wars dating back more than 170 years. Aiming to protect British India from the expanding Russian empire, the British fought a series of conflicts on Afghan territory between 1838 and 1919. The Anglo-Afghan wars of the 19th and early 20th centuries were ill-conceived and led to some of the worst military disasters ever sustained by British forces in this part of the world, with poor*

strategy in the First Afghan War resulting in the annihilation of 16,000 soldiers and civilians in a single week. In his new book, Jules Stewart explores the potential danger of replaying Britain's military catastrophes and considers what can be learnt from revisiting the story of these earlier Afghan wars."

APPEALS FOR HELP

Can any member assist with the following? If so, please reply to the enquirers direct or via the Editor.

Mr Suniti Mohindra email mohindra@gis.net is writing the history of his Grandfather Ralla Ram Mohindra who was recruited in India in 1896 and sent to help build the Uganda Railway. He was a graduate of the University of Lahore and took the railhead from Mazerus to Kisumu. Does any member have any information on the Uganda Railway?

Mr Brian Greenfield is trying to locate a book by a Thomas Morley called "*The Cause of the Charge of the Light Brigade*". Mr Morley was a cousin of Mr Greenfield's late mother. Does any member know where a copy might be available?

CHATHAM WARGAME

The last issue mentioned the wargame with Britains figures that Ted Herbert, the Society's secretary, put on at the RE Museum in Chatham. As promised, here are the pictures.



The battlefield. Khartoum is represented by the building at the bottom left with General Gordon and an Egyptian garrison (unseen from this angle) behind the walls. The British *zeriba* is at the top right. In due time, camel mounted Dervishes will enter from the top left and hordes of Hadendoa tribesmen (Fuzzy-Wuzzies) from bottom right.



The Black Watch defend the *zeriba*.



The Camel Corps. It was pointed out that the Camel Corps fought dismounted but they are still great figures.



"Allah Akbar!"



One of The Black Watch Pipers.



A desperate attempt to break out! Grenadier Guards manning the *zeriba* behind.

BOER WAR LETTER

Michael Parker has emailed to say that a 42-page letter written by a British sergeant to his father during the Anglo-Boer War has been sold at an auction in Oxfordshire for £1,500. The letter, written by Farrier Sergeant William Smith of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, gave his account of the Siege of Ladysmith and was sold together with his Queen's chocolate box (contents uneaten).



Sgt. William Smith 5th Lancers

The BBC website - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-14647619> - gives the following additional details:

“On 7 November 1899 he wrote:

‘Yesterday evening the Manchesters lost a lot of men.

'I went up on the hill this afternoon it was a awful sight, English and Boers laying about in little heaps, one place only about 30 yards square 42 Boers lay slaughtered by scrapnel [sic].'

The last entry was written on the final day of the siege on 28 February 1900.

He wrote:

'At last we have been watching the Boers in full retreat all this afternoon thousands & thousands of them for 4 solid hours, one continual stream of wagons, they are a bit too far out for our Naval Guns too [sic] reach them and our horses and men are too weak to go after them.

'If we only had a Brigade each of Cavalry and artillery fit we could give a good parting gift.'

Sergeant Smith survived the war and later took over his father's china and glass repairing business in Marylebone. He died in 1939 aged 70."

NEW BOOK (2)

British Colonial Badges: Military Insignia of the Land Forces of the Colonies, Protectorates and Dependencies by Barry Renfrew, Margaret Renfrew and Bill Cranston. Published by Terrier Press, 15 Hollow Way Lane, Amersham HP6 6DJ. Terrier.press@btinternet.com . 224pp. Hardback. Colour illustrations. £50 (or £45 direct from publisher).

The Publishers say: *"More than 1400 cap badges, helmet plates, belt buckles and other items illustrated in full colour, most at actual size - many rare and unique and unusual items - Condensed histories of the military forces of each territory with details on dozens of regular, volunteer, constabulary and police units, with original photographs."*

CULLINARY CORNER - CRIMEA CUP

That great chef Alexis Soyer, reformer of Army catering in the Crimean War, head chef at the Reform Club and who gave his name to the British Army's Soyer stove also produced the recipe for the following refreshing drink called Crimea Cup.

Ingredients:

One quart syrup of orgeat (a syrup made from almonds, sugar and rose water).

One pint cognac.

A half a pint of maraschino liqueur.

A quarter pint of light rum.

Three bottles of champagne.

Two bottles of soda water.

Three ounces of sugar.

The juice of four lemons.

Method:

Put all the ingredients, except the champagne, into a punch bowl and stir well until the sugar is dissolved. Whip the mixture with an egg whisk to whiten it. Add the champagne last of all.

M. Soyer did not say how many this quantity will serve.

There is a variation using Italian sparkling wine instead of champagne called "Crimea Cup a la Marmora" in honour of the Sardinian C-in-C in the Crimea.

THE ARMIES OF INDIA

Many members will know of the 1911 book *The Armies of India* written by Lt. General Sir George McMunn and illustrated by Major A C Lovett. A free and legal pdf copy of this, complete with the colour plates, is available on line at:

<http://www.archive.org/download/cu31924022927283/cu31924022927283.pdf>

(The Editor is indebted for this information to a fellow member of an on-line toy soldier forum who calls himself "Henry Martini". How the Editor wishes he'd thought of that name first!)

PETER DUNN LETTERS & AUTOGRAPHS

Peter Dunn's latest list of autographs, letters etc has the following Victorian items on it:

- A letter from Admiral Sir Percy Scott the man who revolutionised Naval Gunnery, devised the naval field gun race at the Royal Tournament, and who, when Captain of HMS Terrible, landed his guns to fight the Boers - £18.
- A letter from Sir William Fenwick Williams, British commissioner with the Turkish Army during the Crimean War, defender of Kars and central figure in the huge painting in the National Army Museum showing the city's final capitulation - £38.
- A letter from Field Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala confirming arrangements for a journey - £68.
- A short letter from George Wyndham dated 1899 about a convalescent home for soldiers. Although a politician at this date, he had served in the Coldstream Guards at Suakin and in Cyprus - £15.
- A lengthy letter from General Sir George Brown (commanded the Light Division at the Alma and Inkerman) written in 1860 when C-in-C Ireland to the Under Sec. of State for War - £82.
- A pencil signature and coloured photograph dated 1910 of General Sir Harry Maclean sometime military adviser to the Sultan of Morocco (his rank was a Moroccan one) - £14.
- A Commission dated 1840 signed by Sir Jasper Nicolls as C-in-C East Indies - £42.
- A letter dated 1849 from the Lt. Col. of the Coldstream Guards telling some unlucky chap that, by the Duke of Cambridge's orders, candidates for the Guards will now have to sit the same examination as candidates for a commission in the Line - £10.
- Not strictly military but a cheque signed by Eliphalt Remington founder of the arms firm that bears his name - £90.

(For someone with military or naval interests, I think a framed letter would make an ideal Xmas present, Ed.)

For the full list, contact Peter as 32B Bow Road (Basement Flat), Bow, London E3 4LN. Phone 0208 981 8844 between 8am and 8pm.

ALDERSHOT MILITARIA SOCIETY EXHIBITION AND FAIR

This will be held on 9 October 2011 at The Farnham Maltings, Bridge Sq. Farnham, Surrey from 10am to 3pm. Admission £2. Further details 01252 745444.

AUCTION REPORT

Wallis & Wallis's Arms & Militaria Auction on 14 June 2011 drew to buyers from around the Globe from countries as far ranging as the USA, South Africa and Russia.

A Crimea medal with four clasps for Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman and Sebastopol (engraved "W. Wood 12 B. RA") in near very fine condition sold for £500.

A post 1902 officer's helmet plate of The Queens (Royal West Surrey Regiment) with a scarlet cloth backing to the plate centre, in good condition overall made £260.

A .577/450" Martini Henry Mark II rifle with walnut stock and its original steel ramrod. The frame marked and dated with a crowned "VR" and "Enfield - 1875 - II" and the breech stamped with ordnance proofs, inspector's marks and government sale marks. In basically good condition it sold for £450.

A good 1853 pattern cavalry trooper's sword, with its steel scabbard with two rings sold for £360.

The July sale on 26 July 2011 saw the Donald Parker collection of helmet plates and fur cap grenades come under the hammer and a magnificent collection it was.

A scarce fur cap grenade badge of The Royal Munster Fusiliers sold for £310. An officer's gilt and silver-plated helmet plate of The King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment), with crimson velvet centre backing made £360 to a room bidder against a number of others, including several on the telephone and two Commission Bidders.

Prices stayed at this level with the lowest being £290 for an officer's gilt and silver-plated helmet plate of Prince Albert's (Somersetshire) Light Infantry and the highest £480 for an officer's gilt and silver-plated helmet plate of The Royal Marines Light Infantry with blue enamel backing to the motto scroll. It sold for £480 to a commission bidder.

Away from badges, a William IV flintlock cavalry pistol with 9-inch barrel and measuring 15-inches overall sold for £575 even though the barrel was heavily pitted and cleaned. The pistol was Enfield proved with the plate stamped with crown over "WR". The walnut stock had the Ordnance view mark, broad arrow and "BO", with regulation brass mounts and swivel ramrod.

WALLIS & WALLIS SALE DATES FOR 2011

6th September 2011.

18th & 19th October 2011 (last entry 10th September 2011).

22nd November 2011 (last entry 22nd October 2011).

CROSS RECOVERED

Finally, Michael Parker has sent in the following item from his BBC local news website:

"Police are trying to trace the owner of a church cross that is dedicated to a fallen Kent soldier. Officers from Norfolk Constabulary recovered the brass cross in Great Yarmouth in July and believe it may have been stolen from Norfolk or Kent. The item has an inscription on the back dedicated to the memory of Capt John Pellew Carvosso, of the 5th Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment. Capt Carvosso was killed in action in Kurdistan, in 1921. Both Norfolk Constabulary and Kent Police have asked for anyone with information about the cross or its theft to contact officers." Does any member recognise it?



Soldiers' Small Book is published in March, June, September and December by the Victorian Military Society (Registered Charity No. 1117006). Copyright Hon. Editor, Dan Allen 20 Priory Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7QN. Please send any items you think may be of interest to the Editor at the above address or by email at vmsdan@msn.com. The deadline for the next issue is 22nd November 2011. The mention of any person, firm, organisation or company in Soldiers' Small Book is for readers' information only and does not imply either a recommendation or an endorsement by the Society. The Editor reserves the right to edit any contribution as he sees fit.