

SOLDIERS' SMALL BOOK
NEWSLETTER OF THE
VICTORIAN MILITARY SOCIETY
MARCH 2012 – ISSUE No. 92

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Military Society (Registered Charity No. 1117006) will be held at in the Board Room of the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 on Saturday 9th June 2012 at Noon.

Any member, who wishes to propose a motion at the AGM, or stand for election to the Council, should notify the Society's Secretary, Ted Herbert in writing by 9th May 2012. Ted's contact details are in *Soldiers of the Queen*.

GUEST SPEAKER AT THE SOCIETY'S AGM

After the business part of the AGM (scheduled to last about 15 minutes) Dr Rodney Attwood author of "*Roberts and Kitchener*" will give a talk on the subject of Lords Roberts and Kitchener in South Africa.

"BRING AND BUY" SALE AND AUCTION AT THE SOCIETY'S AGM

After Dr Attwood's talk, there will be time after the talk for informal discussion, members' display of photographs etc, a "Bring and Buy" sale and an auction. All in all it promises to be a most enjoyable day and we look forward to seeing as many members as possible there.

THE COUNCIL

The Society is run by a Council of officers whose names appear in the back of *Soldiers of the Queen*. While it is a happy and efficient body of men (and one woman) we really could do with some new members to joins us and provide a fresh view of how the Society should be run.

The duties of a Council member are not heavy – a Council meeting three times a year, always on a Saturday, at the National Army Museum in London (NB: free parking in the Museum car park if you have to drive in) and after that it is really about how much you want to do.

The Society has a growing membership. Do any of our new members want to play a part in running the show? If so, let Ted Herbert know.

THE BROWNE MEDAL

Each year the Council of the Society awards the Browne Medal to the contributor who, in the Council's opinion, has produced the most original contributions to *Soldiers of the Queen* in the previous 12 months.

The Council is pleased to announce that this year's award goes to Richard Stevenson for his articles on "The Cavalry College at Richmond" (issue 145) and "Tailors and Commission-Jobbing" (issue 147).

SOCIETY VISIT TO THE BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY MUSEUM

The Society has been able to arrange a private tour of the Berkshire Yeomanry Museum in Windsor on Saturday 16th June 2012 from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

The Museum's collection covers the role, arms and uniforms of the Regiment since its beginnings in 1794 including its activities during the Anglo-Boer War, the First World War, and Second World War.

The Museum is housed in the TA centre at the junction of Bolton Road and Bolton Avenue in Windsor. There is some limited parking. Directions etc will be sent on request.

Non-members are very welcome and the trip is **free**. If you would like to come please let the Editor know. He can be contacted on 01635 48628 or by email at vmsdan@msn.com.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2012-13

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

If you have not renewed your membership for the year 2012-13, please do so now. If you prefer to pay by credit card can you please do so via the PayPal option on the Society's website www.victorianmilitarysociety.org.uk. If you do not have internet access, then send your credit card details to me and I will process the payment as soon as I am able to do so.

Payment of your subscription entitles you to receive all journals etc. published by the Society during the membership year commencing on 1st April 2012.

If you are a UK taxpayer and have not done so already, please also complete the gift aid declaration so that the Society can reclaim tax in respect of your subscription.

If you are not sure of your membership status, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01635 48628 or by email at vmsdan@msn.com.

Please note, to comply with the UK Data Protection Act, the Society maintains a database of members' names and addresses for mailing purposes. In accordance with a decision taken by members at a Society AGM some years ago, members' details are **not** passed on to third parties.

"WAR HORSE" AT THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Roger Stearn has visited the exhibition at the National Army Museum and has sent this report:

The National Army Museum's exhibitions are always well worth visiting, and their current "War Horse: Fact and Fiction" (runs to August 2012) is no exception. Inspired by the recent film, it has features on the novel, play and film, but is mostly on their wider context, horses and mules in the army and war: in the cavalry, transport and sport. It includes weapons – from a 1640 wheel-lock carbine to a 1908 pattern sword – uniforms – authentic and from the film – medals, trophies, saddlery, paintings, photographs,

models, and a life-size steel-wire statue of a horse. There is also Colonel James Skinner's tiger-claw horse's neck band.

Although the exhibition is interesting, don't expect too much. It is neither comprehensive nor does it engage with recent research and reinterpretation of the cavalry's role. Mules could have fuller coverage; there is no mention of the army's post-war mule companies in Hong Kong. Also, the odd error has slipped through: the Britain's mountain artillery gun was not quick-firing. Nevertheless, we definitely recommend "*War Horse: Fact and Fiction*".

KIPLING SOCIETY WEBSITE

Michael Parker has been in touch to say that the Kipling Society's website has a new section for soldiers which, among other things, is intended to publish photographs of the Victorian Army, starting with a nice picture of the "Dirty 'Arf 'Undred" on campaign.

The page to go to is: http://www.kipling.org.uk/soldiers_fra.htm and scroll down to the bottom of the page. Could be a website worth keeping an eye on.

SIR HENRY BENBOW KCB DSO

Mr Euan Maclean has been in touch to ask if any member has, or knows of, a picture of Henry Benbow RN, later Sir Henry Benbow KCB DSO? Benbow was a an engineer officer in the Royal Navy who served in the gunboat *Safieh* which rescued Colonel Wilson's party after the failed attempt to rescue Gordon from Khartoum in 1885. Benbow ended his career as Chief Inspector of Machinery (i.e. the RN's senior engineer) and while there is a lot written about him nobody seems to be able to find a picture. If you know of one please let the Editor know.

A BARGAIN!

Roger Stearn says that Volume V of "*The British Cavalry; Egypt, Syria and Palestine 1914-1919*" by the Marquess of Anglesey was now on sale at the National Archives in Kew for a discount price of £15 (or £18.96 on Amazon including postage).

SOLDIERS IN SILLOTH

Soldiers in Silloth is a project aiming to provide a first-class exhibition/museum displaying toy soldiers and related items from around the world as a new visitor attraction in the seaside resort of Silloth on Solway in Cumbria.

A group of local people are setting this up on behalf of the community, based on the private collection of over 10,000 figures, vehicles, guns, castles etc built up by local resident Tim Barker. He was born and grew up in Silloth and wishes to dedicate the collection and premises to house it in for the benefit of the town.

The collection includes figures from the Wild West, the American Civil War, Vikings, the French Foreign Legion, Robin Hood and much more in dioramas and cabinet displays. Special displays will include Hadrian's Wall and the battles of Waterloo and Gettysburg.

The group behind the project is looking for willing volunteers to donate maybe half a day per week to help run the premises.

The website at <http://www.soldiersinsilloth.co.uk/> has more details and Soldiers in Silloth can be contacted on 016973 31246 or by email at enquiries@solidersinsiloth.co.uk.

NEW BOOKS ETC

The following is based on the publisher's releases. The Editor has not seen the books etc. themselves. The mention of any book, DVD or other item in Soldiers' Small Book is for readers' information only and does not imply either a recommendation or an endorsement by the Society.

The Diary of an Indian Cavalry Officer. John Hatfield Brooks (1843-63) edited by Richard Morgan.

John Hatfield Brooks served in the 1st Bengal Light Cavalry and its successor Regiments, for 20 years from 1843, and kept a daily diary during most of that period. He paints a vivid picture of the events during the 1857 Mutiny at Mhow, where he was a major participant; and of the following year's actions of the Sarun Field Force (using the crew of *HMS Pearl*), in a successful campaign to contain the Mutineers. The Diary also describes the Kingdom of Oudh, both before and after its annexation by the East India Company.

Published for the first time, in a limited numbered edition of 250 copies. 289 pages with illustrations.

UK Price £40.00 (plus £4.95 UK postage) and available from Pagoda Tree Press, 4 Malvern Buildings, Fairfield Park, Bath BA1 6JX or e-mail: hughrayner@pagodatreepress.com.

Marching to the Drums by John Norris. To be released May 2012 by The History Press,. Price £12.99. Paperback. Illustrated

Military drummers have played a crucial role in warfare throughout history. Soldiers marched to battle to the sound of the drums and used the beat to regulate the loading and re-loading of their weapons during the battle. Drummers were also used to raise morale during the fight.

This is the first work to chart the rise of drums in military use and how they came to be used on the battlefield as a means of signalling. This use was to last for almost 4,000 years when modern warfare with communications rendered them obsolete. Even so, drummers continued to serve in the armies of the world and performed many acts of heroism as they served as stretcher bearers to rescue the wounded from the battlefield.

From ancient China, Egypt and the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan the drum was used on the battlefield. The 12th century Crusaders helped re-introduce the drum to Europe and during the Napoleonic Wars of the 18th and 19th centuries the drum was to be heard resonating across Europe.

Drummers had to flog their comrades and beat their drums on drill parade. Today they are ceremonial but this work tells how they had to face enemies across the battlefield with only their drum.

The following is presented exactly as the Editor received it. He does not understand a word of it.

“Six Great Battles Apps - Available From 18th March 2012! Amber Books will be launching the Great Battles series in universal iOS and Android versions on 18th March 2012.

- Cannae 216 BC – Hannibal annihilates the Roman legions
- Blenheim 1704 – Duke of Marlborough defeats Louis XIV’s French army [*Presumably with apologies to Prince Eugene, the Austrians and the Bavarians for ignoring them! - Ed.*]
- Gettysburg 1863 – Turning point of the US Civil War
- Pearl Harbor 1941 – Sneak Japanese attack brings the US into WWII
- Stalingrad 1942/43 – Decisive battle on the Eastern Front in WWII
- D-Day 1944 – Largest ever sea landings in France on 6 June

Each app has an animated map complete with a voiceover explaining the battle stage by stage, a narrated history and gallery give you the full background to the battle, while a quiz tests out your new knowledge.

- Watch the explosions on US battleships as the Japanese attack waves strike.
- Listen to how the Roman legionaries were lured into a trap and slaughtered.
- Read how the Red Army surrounded the Germans in Stalingrad.
- View images of the men and vehicles landing on the D-Day beaches.
- Test your knowledge of General Robert E Lee’s Confederates.

The apps are available to buy from the App Store and Google Play (formerly Android Market).

Coming next in the series: the fall of Constantinople 1453 and Nelson’s victory at Trafalgar 1805.”

PETER DUNN LETTERS & AUTOGRAPHS

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

- A set of sailing orders signed by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, when C-in-C Mediterranean Fleet dated 1886 - £85.
- A signature on card of Edward, 1st Viscount Cardwell, Gladstone’s Secretary of State for War and Army reformer - £7.
- A note from General Sir Archibald Hunter (“Kitchener’s Sword Arm” in the Sudan) dated 1931 – 25.

- An application form for tickets to the first Royal review of the Volunteer Force in Hyde Park on 23rd June 1860 (two tickets requested by James Bacon Esq. of 1 Kensington Gardens Terrace) - £4.

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

AUCTION REPORT

The principal Victorian items in Wallis & Wallis's sale on 14th February 2012 were the following:

A group of three comprising an India General Service 1854 with clasp for N E Frontier 1891; India General Service 1895 with clasp for the Relief of Chitral 1895; Queen's South Africa with Natal clasp. The medals were script engraved and impressed, "*4232 Pte. J.J. Mason, 4th Bn, KRRC*", (last two as 1st Bn) sold for £770. Private Mason died of disease at Mooi River, Natal 9th February 1900.

Another India General Service 1854, this time with three clasps: Burma 1885-7; Burma 1887-89; Chin Lushai 1889-90; script engraved "*Surgn. G C Hall, IMS*" together with its corresponding miniature sold for £300.

A French Model 1854 heavy cavalry trooper's sword with a 38½ inch blade, regulation brass hilt, cap shaped pommel and wire bound leather grip (most of the wire missing), in its steel scabbard made £500.

Finally, a 6-shot .44" Colt Model 1860 Army percussion revolver with a naval scene on the cylinder and the frame and butt cut for a shoulder stock made a hammer price of £1600.

Wallis & Wallis's next sales are the Spring Connoisseur Sale on 1st and 2nd May 2012 and an Arms & Militaria Sale on 12th June 2012.

THREE FINAL QUERIES

1. Does any member know what the initials "*R.V.G.C.*" stand for? It is referred to as "*previous military service*" on a person's attestation papers in 1916. The person concerned was living in Devon, born 1884, to 1913 when he emigrated to Australia. The actual words are "*1st Vol R.V.G.C England*".
2. The Landguard Fort Trust in Suffolk have asked "*What hours would a soldier keep when home based and in the Royal Garrison Artillery during the Victorian period?*"
3. A gentleman in Canada is requesting information about a bugle he has in his possession. On the bugle is inscribed "*1st P W R F*". The enquirer thought this was something to do with either the South or North Staffordshire Regiments but the Staffordshire Regimental Museum says not and passed the query on to the Society.

If you can help with any of the above, please let the Editor know.

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 May 2012. The Editor reserves the right to edit any contribution as he sees fit.