

**SOLDIERS' SMALL BOOK
NEWSLETTER OF THE
VICTORIAN MILITARY SOCIETY
JUNE 2012 – ISSUE No. 93**

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

First, apologies for the late appearance of this issue, a number of domestic crises meant that the Editor was not able to get around to finishing it as soon as he should have done. As this is the issue following the Society's AGM there are necessarily a number of "parish notices".

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Please note members who have not paid their subscriptions for the 2012/13 membership year by 31st August 2012 will not be sent September's issue of Soldiers of the Queen.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held in the Board Room of the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 on Saturday 9th June 2012.

The Chairman said he was pleased to be able to comment on a more upbeat year than had been the case in his two previous reports. Membership stood at 357 in March 2012, which was up to the June 2011 level already. Economies on an already tight budget had been introduced by reducing the number of Council meetings from four to three, discontinuing the PO Box and by renegotiating the contract with the printers; and it was not proposed to increase the subscription. He noted that the Society should be grateful for the work put in by the Council members over the year, especially by Dan and Beverley Allen and Andy Smith. He looked forward to another improved year in 2012/13.

The Treasurer had sent his apologies for absence and his report for the preceding year was tabled. It indicated that the Society had ended the year (2011-2012) with the Profit and Loss Account showing a credit of £818.92, which was an improvement for that for 2010-11 when the credit balance was £239.99. The income received from donations, advertising and sales was up although subscriptions and consequently gift aid were down. For the first time for several years, the income from subscriptions had covered the printing and postage costs of the journal. The issue of *Soldier's Small Book* by email had been a great help in this respect.

His report pointed out that the Society should be very grateful to Dan and Beverley Allen for their contributions to the Society's financial well-being by way of sales, advertising and lecture fees. He also expressed gratitude to the Auditor, M G Horner, for his work, for which he had again made no charge.

In the election of Council members, the following were re-elected unopposed:

Chairman	Chris Kempton
Hon. Secretary	Ted Herbert
Hon. Treasurer	David Nalson
Membership and Advertising Manager	Beverley Allen
Publicity Officer and Newsletter Editor	Dan Allen
Journal Editor	Andy Smith
Reviews Editor	Roger Stearn
Council Member	Ray Boyles

Michael Scott will stand down as a Council member but will continue *ex officio* as Webmaster. There was therefore a vacancy for a new Council member. Anyone interested was invited to contact the Chairman.

Following the AGM Dr Rodney Atwood gave a most entertaining and interesting talk on Lords Roberts and Kitchener in South Africa, which raised some interesting thoughts about the Anglo-Boer War being the British Army's first real experience of having to suppress what would today be called "insurgency" a challenge which, after a shaky start, it successfully met. As well as Dr Atwood's talk, Ralph Moore-Morris staged a display of some of his large collection of Sudanese and African weaponry.

THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE

On Friday 25th May the VMS web site was compromised by an unknown hacker using a technique known as script injection, typically, this works by forcing a site to execute code when it was expecting to process another input, i.e. a user name. Because script injection attacks the site code itself, it is able to completely avoid webserver security. The hacker had created a phishing web site within our own, for an explanation of phishing please follow this link <http://www.banksafeonline.org.uk/common-scams/phishing>.

This was identified by our hosting company, Heart Internet, on Wednesday 6 June and as a precaution they shut down our site, hence the various messages displayed when trying to access the site over the last few days.

The Society holds no sensitive data within our web site; as we use PayPal we do not store credit card details. There should be no effect on those members that have used the web site to purchase memberships or other items.

In the meantime, please treat any email purporting to be from the VMS with suspicion and do not open any attachments.

LOCAL BRANCHES

At the AGM Glen Jones put forward a motion to the effect that the Society should set up local Branches in order to further its aims of fostering interest in military aspects of the Victorian period.

This was approved unanimously and Glen hopes to start the first of these in the Medway towns, holding meetings bi-monthly or quarterly, probably at the *Black Lion* in Gillingham. Glen sees these as consisting of either talks on Victorian military campaigns or just social evenings to discuss our shared interest in Victorian military history. He sees this as a purely informal thing, no rules/bye-laws/officials etc. If you would like to know more, Glen can be contacted at glenwardjones@yahoo.co.uk or via the Editor.

If you would like to try your hand at setting up a local branch, please let the Secretary know.

NOT MENDING FENCES

The Editor is currently reading "*A Year in Space*" an account by the Scots author Eric Linklater of his time as a war correspondent in the Korean War. In one of the opening chapters Linklater mentions that Pitcalzean House, his home in Ross & Cromarty, was previously owned by Dr Brydon, who, as members will not need telling, was the sole member of the Kabul garrison to reach safety in the disastrous retreat of 1842.

When Dr Brydon returned home he brought the pony that had carried him to safety with him.

Linklater, when the house came into possession, wanted the fences round the house repaired. This was done but the local workmen insisted in leaving one damaged section in place. It seems the damage had been caused by Dr Brydon's pony and they saw it as a memorial to both the pony and his owner. One wonders if it is still there.

LUNCHTIME LECTURE AT THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

On 19th July 2012 at 12.30pm, Professor Mark Connelly will give a lecture entitled "*They Lack Cavalry Spirit*", on the British debate over mounted infantry 1902-14.

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 Sword and the Sketch Book by Ian Heron. Published by The History Press.

"Victoria's long and illustrious reign saw Britain ruling the world's biggest Empire - but it came at a heavy cost. Political journalist and military historian Ian Heron brings to life these conflicts as they appeared to those fighting them and to those they left at home. He has brought together illustrations from the time eagerly devoured by an anxious public but largely unseen since. They show Victorian warfare in all its horror and glory together with the advances in an increasingly mechanised age to transport and supply the troops. And it pays tribute to those war artists and correspondents who risked their lives alongside the troops."

Jabin & the Space Pirates

While on the topic of new books the Editor must mention a new science fantasy novel called “*Jabin & the Space Pirates*”, aimed at what the publishing world insists on calling “young adults”. To quote the publishers:

“In the space colony of New Wales, the pirate attacks are both relentless and merciless. Having lost both his parents, Jabin has been adopted by his austere and spiteful uncle and aunt who live in the space colony of New Wales which is riven with religious and political rivalry, and prey to the vicious marauding pirates whose cruelty and greed are beyond all imagination. When Jabin volunteers to surrender himself to a pirate raiding party to save a friend, he does so believing that nothing can be worse than his current suffering. However, he is soon to discover that things can always get worse when the stakes are high, the rewards are vast and slave labour is there for the taking. However, the forces of law and order sent out from Earth are getting ready to fight back, and Jabin could have a vital part to play in the ensuing war if he can only stay alive.”

What on Earth, the Editor hears you ask, has this got to do with the Victorian Military Society?

Well, two things. First, the author is our Membership Secretary, Beverley Allen. Second, the forces of law and order from Earth may have a familiar ring to members of the Society, being a battalion of infantry, organised on the 8 company system, complete with worldly wise Colonel, an RSM with a ferocious moustache, and a newly joined subaltern who has a tendency to put his foot in it.

The Editor read it and, in spite of his fears that he wouldn't, he loved it. But then he is married to the author.

If you have a teenager in the family who is a reader of science fantasy/fiction, this is the book for them. It is available from Amazon as a paperback at: http://www.amazon.co.uk/Jabin-Space-Pirates-Beverley-Allen/dp/1477578919/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1341156521&sr=8-1 price £8.99 or as a download for a kindle at an amazing 77p. If, like the Editor, you still patronise real bookshops, it is published by the US based publishers Taylor Street Publishing.

PETER DUNN LETTERS & AUTOGRAPHS

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

- A letter from General Sir Frederick Forestier-Walker dated 1907 declining at invitation. £35. Sir Frederick was present at the Battle of Inyezane and the occupation of Eshowe in the Anglo-Zulu War. He commanded British Troops in Egypt 1890 before becoming GOC Western District in 1895. In 1899 he became GOC Cape Colony and in 1905 was appointed Governor of Gibraltar.
- An Anglo-Boer War pass dated 27th December 1900 allowing a Miss Welback and sisters to pass through the piquet line at Heilbron signed by Lt Colonel A. E. Dalzell Officer Commanding Heilbron. £28.

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

AUCTION REPORT

Wallis & Wallis's Spring Connoisseur Auction on 2nd May 2012 brought collectors and dealers from far and wide and commission and telephone bidders from as far as Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA, with Russian buyers being a strong presence in the Auction Room yet again.

There was huge interest in a scarce 1855 pattern officer's shako of The Royal Marines Light Infantry. With a black felt body and patent leather top, headband, front and back peaks, it had a gilt and silver plated crowned star helmet plate with globe and motto centre. The ball tuft plume was in an ornamental socket with VR ciphers.



The scarlet lining had maker's stamp 'J & G Linney, Army Clothiers, 23 Regent Street, London, and on the headband an owner's name, 'Captain E J P Shewan'. In excellent condition it was a battle for ownership between two persistent bidders standing right next to each other at the back of the room. Eventually it sold to one of them for £4,700.

The medal awards and sword of Thomas Hooper, Royal Navy comprising Crimea medal 1854 with two clasps (Inkerman and Sebastopol) and engraved Thomas Hooper, Lieutt (*sic*) HMS Retribution, a Turkish Order of Medjidieh 5th Class and a Sardinian Crimean medal together with his 1827 pattern sword by Widdowson & Veale sold for £1,100.



A framed display of awards “Presented to the officers 1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles by Lt Colonel S.S. Whitaker 1930”, comprising: single Indian General Service medal 1854, mounted above an India General Service 1854, Afghanistan 1878, India General Service 1895, Delhi Durbar 1911 all enclosed within the neck riband of the Order of British India 2nd Class and all headed by a silver badge of the 1st Gurkha Rifles sold to a telephone bidder for £2,200.



Finally, a fine post-1902 gilt helmet of the Gentlemen-at-Arms, with white swan's feather falling plume, padded silk lining and in virtually mint condition sold to a telephone bidder for £3,900.



Wallis & Wallis's next sales are: 24th July 2012; (Coin Sale 4th September 2012); and 16th & 17th October 2012. Last date for entries into the October sale is 8th September.

(Looking at these prices one can only wonder: "Recession? What recession?" Ed.)

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