

**SOLDIERS' SMALL BOOK  
NEWSLETTER OF THE  
VICTORIAN MILITARY SOCIETY  
OCTOBER 2012 – ISSUE No. 95**

**A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

Sunday 21st October is, of course, Trafalgar Day and so to celebrate “The Immortal Memory” of Vice Admiral Lord Nelson we will start with:

**KIPLING AND THE VICTORIAN NAVY**

Rudyard Kipling's works concerning the British Army in the Victorian period are well known. Not so well known, perhaps, is his work “*A Fleet in Being*” based on two trips he made on HMS *Pelorus* a third class cruiser of the Channel Fleet commanded by Captain E H Bayly, an old friend of Kipling's.

The book is now available on-line at: [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A\\_Fleet\\_in\\_Being](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Fleet_in_Being).

Also available is an invaluable set of notes by Rear Admiral P W Brock, and Commander Alastair Wilson at: [http://www.kipling.org.uk/rq\\_fleet\\_intro.htm](http://www.kipling.org.uk/rq_fleet_intro.htm) which go into the technicalities of life at sea in the 19th century for the benefit of landsmen.

All in all it is a fascinating view of the Victorian Navy as seen from one of its smaller units, the type that tends to get overlooked in favour of the big battleships.

**TREASURER WANTED**

Our Treasurer, David Nalson, has said that he will not be standing for re-election for the year 2013/14 although, if required, he hopes to be able to take up the position again in 2014/15.

The Society therefore needs a new Treasurer, either as a permanent replacement, or to provide one year's cover for 2013/14.

The main duties are banking members' subscriptions and paying the printer's bills for *Soldiers of the Queen*. There is also the thrice yearly Council meeting at the National Army Museum in London which are really rather jolly affairs.

If you would be interested, please contact our Chairman, Chris Kempton, for details. Surely there must be at least one retired banker or accountant in the Society who would like to keep his or her professional skills in working order!

**CLOCK**

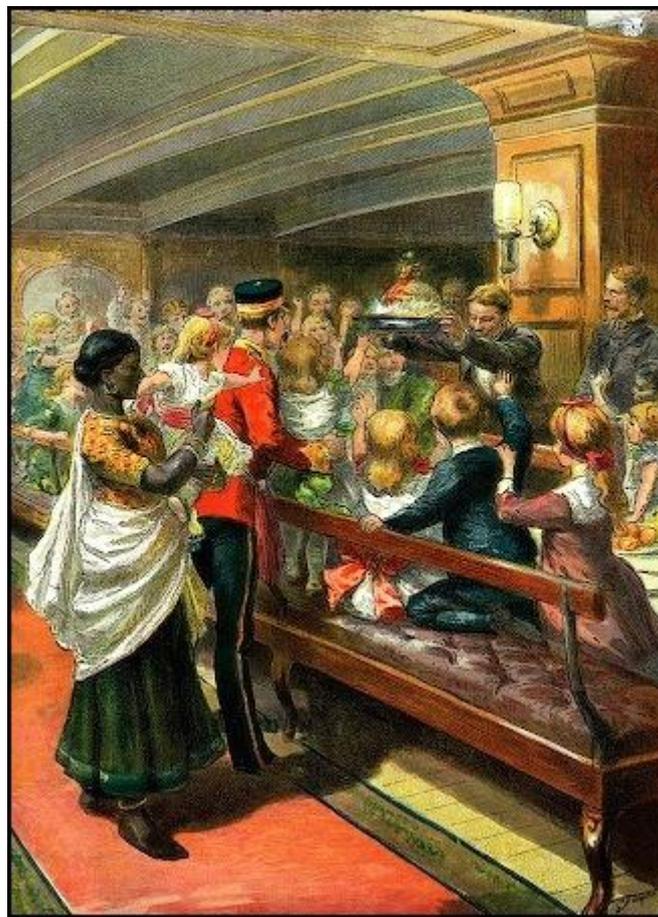
A friend of the Editor's has a very ornate clock which has been in his family for some while with the following inscription on the base:

*“Col Sgt T Cooper  
As a token of esteem from the  
Howden South African Contingent”*

Has any member every come across a reference to Colour Sergeant Cooper or the Howden South African contingent? If you have, please let the Editor know. The owner is keen to find out about it.

### **INTERESTING WEBSITE**

For those researching their family history or with an interest in the less widely trodden paths of military history, The Army Children Archive (TACA) has a site at <http://www.archhistory.co.uk> dedicated to the history of the British Army’s children. The splendid picture below “Children’s Christmas Dinner at Sea” is taken from the site.



From the standard of the accommodation, the presence of the officer, chaplain and *ayah*, the Editor would say this is Christmas Dinner for officers’ children rather than those of the other ranks.

The site’s founder, Clare Gibson, has also written *Army Childhood: British Army Children’s Lives and Times*, published by Shire Publications Limited. The whole site is well worth a look.

## SURREY NAVAL AND MILITARY BOOK FAIR 2012

This will be held on Saturday 3rd November 2012 at The Royal Logistic Corps Museum, Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut, Camberley, Surrey GU16 6RW. Opening times: 10am to 4pm. Admission: Free. Ample free car parking.

Directions: The RLC Museum is easily accessible by car from the M3. Exit the M3 at Junction 3 taking the first exit for the A322 towards West End and Bisley. At the Gordons' School roundabout take the third exit sign-posted Camberley B311. Continue on the B311 until the next roundabout and take the first exit the B3015, signposted Deepcut. Continue on the B3015 to Deepcut and turn left at the sign for The RLC Museum. *[The Editor has done this. It is actually easier than it sounds. Ed.]* If using Sat Nav to locate The RLC Museum, enter the end point of your journey as "Newfoundland Road, Deepcut". A bus service connects Brookwood Station (South West Trains London Waterloo to Southampton main line) with the museum.

## NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM – LUNCHTIME LECTURES

The following free lectures take place at 12.30 on the following Thursdays at the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea. Click on the links for more details or ring the Museum on 020 7730 0717.

- [The Sky Rained Camels: The Parallel Careers of Captain WE Johns and Biggles](#) – Dr. Geoff Hales - 1 November 2012
- [56th Infantry Division on the Western Front](#) -Matt Brosnan - 8 November 2012
- ['Wellington's Worst Scrape': The Failure at Burgos and the Retreat to Portugal](#) - Carole Divall -15 November 2012
- [Manstein: Hitler's Greatest General](#) - Major General Mungo Melvin - 22 November 2012
- [An Officer and a Gentlewoman](#) - -Capt. Héloïse Goodley - 29 November 2012
- [Britain's Involvement in Vietnam](#) - Rob Fleming - 6 December 2012
- [Engines of War: How Railways Changed the Nature of Warfare](#) - Christian Wolmar - 13 December 2012
- [The Battle of Cambrai, 1917](#) - John Sadler - 20 December 2012
- [The War of 1812: Britain's Forgotten Conflict](#) - Keith Downen - 3 January 2013
- [Fashion, Power, and Protection: Army Uniform During the English Civil War](#) - Jennifer Daley - 10 January 2013
- ['War in the Wilderness': Chindit Campaigns of 1943-44](#) - Tony Redding - 17 January 2013

- [The Eagle Unbowed: Poland and the Poles in the Second World War](#) - Halik Kochanski  
- 24 January 2013.

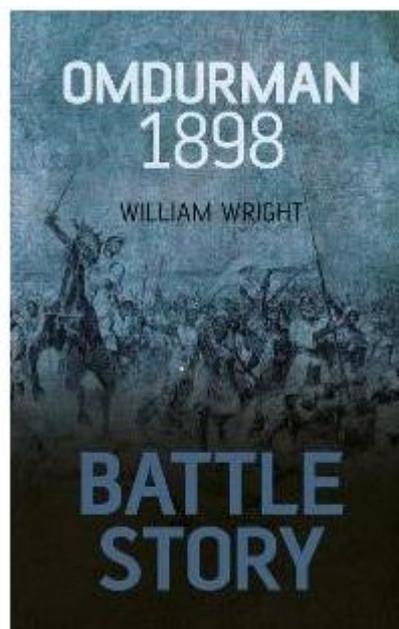
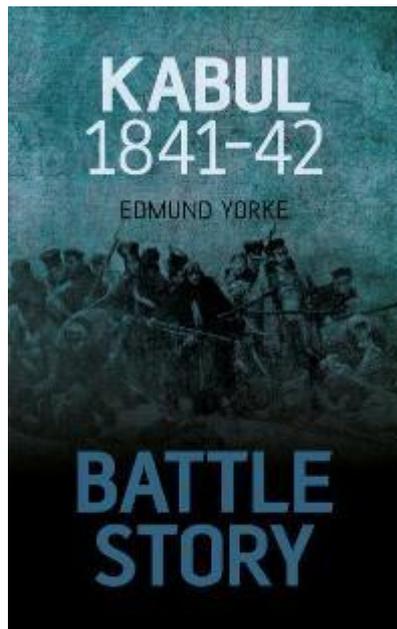
## NEW BOOKS

*The following are taken from the publisher's press releases. The Editor has not seen the books themselves.*



***Australian War Memorial: Treasures from a Century of Collecting* by Nola Anderson. Published by The Australian War Memorial. Price TBC.**

This outstanding new book tells the story of the Memorial and its National Collection, one of the most significant collections of military history in the world. Lavishly illustrated with Collection images and specially commissioned photography, each copy of *Australian War Memorial: Treasures from a Century of Collecting* will be signed by author Nola Anderson, the Memorial's Acting Director. Pre-orders are now being accepted for shipping in late October at: <http://www.awm.gov.au/shop/item/9781742660127/>



***Battle Story Omdurman 1898* by William Wright. Published by The History Press at £9.99.**

“At Omdurman, Kitchener commanded a force of 8,000 British regulars and a mixed force of 17,000 Sudanese and Egyptian soldiers. He arrayed his force in an arc around the village of Egeiga close to the bank of the Nile, where a gunboat flotilla waited in support, facing a wide, flat plain with hills rising to the left and right. The British and Egyptian cavalry were placed on either flank. Al-Taashi's followers, known as Ansar and sometimes referred to as

Dervishes, numbered around 50,000, including some 3,000 cavalry. In *Battle Story Omdurman 1898*, Wright uses First-hand accounts from both sides help the reader to understand all the horrors and glory of that day including the famous charge of the 21st Lancers, often called the last great cavalry charge of the British Army. This was arguably the height of British Empire military dominance.”

***Battle Story Kabul 1841-42* by Edmund Yorke. Published by The History Press at £9.99**

“Kabul is a name that has had much resonance in current affairs over the last few years, however its place in military history can be charted much further back to the first British incursions into Afghanistan during the 19th century. The First Anglo-Afghan War saw British India attempting to obtain power over Central Asia by gaining control of Afghanistan. The conflict was to last for over three years and is often thought to have been one of Britain’s worst disasters in Asia prior to the capture of Singapore during the Second World War. In *Battle Story Kabul 1841-42* Yorke shows how the British had little understanding or appreciation of the terrain or tribal warfare in Afghanistan and incurred heavy casualties, despite being far superior in training and weaponry than the Afghan warriors they faced.”

### **PETER DUNN LETTERS AND AUTOGRAPHS**

Peter Dunn’s latest list of autographs, letters etc. has the following, very senior, Victorian items on it and has a heavy Crimean feel:

- Autograph of Lord Fitzroy Somerset, later Lord Raglan C-in-C in the Crimea, £28.
- Letter from Admiral Sir Charles Napier (commanded at the Bombardment of Acre in 1840 and the Baltic Fleet in the Crimean War) enclosing a petition from a man discharged from Greenwich Hospital, £45.
- Letter from Field Marshal Lord Napier confirming travel arrangements, £78.
- Autograph of Field Marshal Sir John Fox Burgoyne the first Royal Engineer to attain the rank, illegitimate son of “Burgoyne of Saratoga” Chief Engineer in both the Peninsula and the Crimea and father of Captain Hugh Burgoyne VC RN who commanded the ill-fated HMS *Captain* and was lost with her, £20.
- Autograph of Lord Palmerston, Prime Minister during the Crimean War and before that Foreign Secretary and Secretary at War, £20.
- Letter from Admiral Sir Erasmus Ommanney, Arctic explorer and first to discover traces of the lost Franklin Expedition, £62.
- Letter from Field Marshal Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar (served in the Crimea) referring to the Prince of Wales’s appointment to the Order of the Bath, £40.

- Finally, autograph of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author, doctor, goalkeeper for Portsmouth FC, led the campaign to set up a Court of Criminal Appeal, spiritualist and many other things, £245 [*Comparing the prices, truly the pen is mightier than the sword, 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.

### AUCTION REPORT

Wallis and Wallis's Arms and Militaria Auction on 4th September 2012 showed that many people believe militaria continues to be a relatively safe haven for their money in these difficult times. Prices remained buoyant, as can be seen by the results.

A scarce Victorian silver pouch belt badge of The Royal Irish Constabulary, hallmarked Birmingham 1897, maker's mark WD and S, with two screw studs. It was in excellent condition but there were two holes in the centre for attachment of separate device, (now missing). The vendor found it whilst rummaging through a box of bits in a car boot sale. It cost him £1. He had a very good return on his investment when the auctioneer's gavel fell at £340.



A scarce gilt metal sample badge of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (the Islands were a Crown colony from 1916; Ellice Island is now known as Tuvalu, a hitherto little known name which has been suddenly brought to the world's attention due to the recent visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge). The badge shows the rising sun over waves in a crowned circle with title below and an applied albatross. Attached to the badge was an ink label stating: 'Gilbert and Ellice Defence Force. Gilbert and Ellice Labour Corps'. An unusual item which sold for £260.



Deactivated firearms are popular with historic re-enactors, who try their best to use authentic equipment whenever possible. Here we show a de-activated .303" Vickers Heavy Machine Gun, number 8102, on its Mark IV tripod mount, in very good condition with its original wooden crates for gun and tripod. It sold to a commission bidder against a telephone bidder and several room bidders for £1020.



The next three sales at Wallis and Wallis are on: 16th and 17th October 2012, 27th November 2012 and 8th January 2013. Last date for entries into the January sale is 1st December 2012.

**Soldiers' Small Book** is published in August, October, December, February, April and June 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](mailto:vmsdan@msn.com). The deadline for the next issue is 22nd November 2012. The mention of any book, DVD, CD, other publication (in whatever format), person, firm, organisation or company in **Soldiers' Small Book** is for the reader's information only and does not imply either a recommendation or an endorsement either by the Victorian Military Society or by the Editor. The Editor reserves the right to edit any contribution received as he sees fit.