



CHESTERFIELD WFA

Newsletter and Magazine issue 50

Co-Patrons -Sir Hew
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Simkins

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Sheffield MA PhD FRHistS
FRSA

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Lt-Col Graham Parker OBE

Christopher Pugsley FRHistS

Lord Richard Dannat GCB CBE MC
DL

Roger Lee PhD jssc

Dr Jack Sheldon

Branch contacts

Tony Bolton
(Chairman)
anthony.bolton3@btinternet.com

Mark Macartney
(Deputy Chairman)
Markmacartney48@gmail.com

Jane Lovatt (Treasurer)
Grant Cullen (Secretary)
grantcullen@hotmail.com

Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/157662657604082/>
<http://www.wfchesterfield.com/>

Welcome to Issue 50 - the February 2020 Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield WFA.

The next meeting of the Branch will be on
Tuesday 4th February at 7.30 pm in
Chesterfield Labour Club.



Our speaker on Tuesday is Dr Graham Kemp who will
discuss *'The Impact of the economic blockage of
Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2'*

The Branch meets at the Labour Club, Unity House,
Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF on the first Tuesday
of each month. There is plenty of parking available on
site and in the adjacent road. Access to the car park is
in Tennyson Road, however, which is one way and
cannot be accessed directly from Saltergate.



Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2020

Meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF

January	7th	. AGM and Members Night - presentations by Jane Ainsworth, Ed Fordham, Judith Reece, Edwin Astill and Alan Atkinson
February	4th	Graham Kemp `The Impact of the economic blockage of Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2`
March	3rd	Peter Hart Après la Guerre Post-war blues, demobilisation and a home fit for very few.
April	7th	Andy Rawson How Sheffield's smaller industries turned their hand to war work.
May	5th	Nick Baker . The British Army has always fought a long battle with the debilitations cause to its soldier's efficiency through venereal disease, a combination of behavioural change and civilian interference resulted in an 'epidemic' of VD which threatened military effectiveness.
June	2nd	Rob Thompson 'The Gun Machine: A Case Study of the Industrialisation of Battle during the Flanders Campaign, 1917.
July	7th	Tony Bolton `Did Britain have a Strategy for fighting the Great War or did we just blunder from crisis to crisis? "From business as usual to total war"
August	4th	Beth Griffiths `The Experience of the Disabled Soldiers Returning After WWI`
September	1st	John Taylor. 'A Prelude to War' (An Archduke's Visit) - a classic and true tale of `what if` ?
October	6th	Peter Harris Tanks in the 100 Days. Peter will present some of his researches for his Wolverhampton MA course
November	3rd	Paul Handford Women Ambulance Drivers on the Western Front 1914 - 1918.
December	1st	John Beech 'Notts Battery RHA - Nottinghamshire Forgotten Gunners'

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Elder Yard Unitarian Chapel, Chesterfield (see under `Secretary`s Scribbles`)

Any opinions expressed in this Newsletter /Magazine are not necessarily those of the Western Front Association, Chesterfield Branch, in particular, or the Western Front Association in general



A Personal Note from the Chair (40)

I have noticed recently that interest in the First World War has emerged from the post centennial gloom, not as a result of any academic revelation but courtesy of Hollywood. The hype over Sam Mendes new film *1917* seems pervasive. I should at once admit that I have not seen the film, with very few exceptions I don't think I have been to the cinema since it stopped being called 'the pictures'. The general impression however seems to be quite positive, if for no other reason than it eschews stereotypical media 'futility and mawkishness' in favour of a more positive representation of the efforts of the army. A typical response from those who have a wide

knowledge of the First World War seems to have been summed up by a pal of mine who recently gave us a talk on the Robin Hoods when he called it an impressive adventure story with historical inaccuracies thrown in, or words to that effect. I hope to make a rare trip to the local mini cinema when they get hold of the film and I hope my words here won't put you off. My wife will almost certainly refuse to go with me unless I promise not to spoil her enjoyment by picking holes in it the way I did with *Dunkirk* which we saw because her grandfather was one of those lifted from the beaches. Interestingly her grandfather had been wounded in the latter stages of the First World War and had stayed in the army finishing his service on the Isle of Man guarding internees.

It was very encouraging to see the response from the branch to the Members Night which followed our AGM. Grant tells me he has already signed up people for next January but I am sure we can still accommodate you if you would like to do a short presentation or a longer one at some other time. We are also still looking at the survey results which have been returned to date but if you are still thinking about it please let us have your thoughts and ideas.

Best regards,

Tony Bolton

Branch Chair

One of our members has donated a number of military papers which we believe may be of interest to members.

Below is the list - Title of paper and author - if you would like a copy let me know. I can scan it and send it to you in pdf format.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Thinking about Revolutions in Military Affairs | Williamson Murray |
| 2. Men at War: Sources of Morale | Prof. Ian Bellany |
| 3. Friends, Aliens and Enemies. The Lusitania Riots of 1915 | Nicolleta Gullace |
| 4. Indian Army on Western Front 1914-15 | George Morton Jack |
| 5. War Cabinet Minutes 8th June 1917 | National archives |
| 6. Napoleonic and First World War - Revolutions in Military Affairs | A. Liapopoulos |
| 7. Capture of Falfemont Farm, Somme, 1916 | Elizabeth Greenhalgh |
| 8. Air/Land Integration in 100 Days - Third Army | Jonathon Boff |
| 9. British Working Women and WW1 | Susan Pyecroft |
| 10. British Combatants and Uniforms 1914-1918 | Laura Ugolini |
| 11. Guide to IWM collection of Archive Film | IWM |
| 12. Sword of the Lord - Military chaplains - 1 st to 21 st Centuries | Doris L Bergen |

Secretary's Scribbles



Welcome to issue 50 of the WFA Chesterfield Branch Newsletter and Magazine.

It is hard to believe that we have reached the milestone of the 50th edition of this Branch Newsletter. As those who attend branch meetings regularly will attest, we have an average of around 30 at each meeting, but this Newsletter, distributed by e mail reaches nearly 400 and I recently received a lovely letter (and a donation to branch funds) from Harlan and Christina Senior, both WFA members who live in North Anston. Harlan, who will be 90 in April, unfortunately due to mobility issues can't attend meetings, but, as he said in his letter, 'we may not be with you physically, we are with you in spirit'. It is letter's like that which makes producing this newsletter - a 'labour of love' all the more satisfying. Of course, this Newsletter is uploaded by our Branch Vice Chair, Mark Macartney onto the main WFA website where it can be accessed by many, many more.



On Tuesday 4th February we welcome Dr Graham Kemp. Graham is an assistant manager and tour guide at Lancaster Castle. He is also an amateur naval historian who has researched the Allied blockade for the past forty years, and has given many talks on the Great War. He has amassed a large library on the War, from which he draws his research for his most popular talk '*The Impact of the economic blockage of Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2*'

Dr Kemp is the chairman of the North Lancs. Western Front Association

After our last meeting, one of the speakers, Ed Fordham offered to give members a tour Elder Yard Unitarian Chapel in Elder Way, Chesterfield, (next to the co-op.) He can there introduce people to the story of the Chapel during WW1 and the boys from the Sunday School and the register of the attendees and the role of Pearson's Pottery. He would entitle it "Conformity and Dissent - grief vs pride in World War One". Please let me know if there is an interest in this visit and I will organise this with Ed.

We continue to canvass all with whom we are in contact with to find out their thoughts and ideas with a view to taking guidance as to what we should be doing to maintain interest in the Branch and indeed develop it. Partly this is due to the anticipated downturn in interest in the Great War now that all the Centenary Commemorations are behind us, although, it cannot be said that we, as a Branch, are experiencing this. Having said that we do not want to be seen to be resting on our laurels. If you have not already done so, please complete a form (it's on the net two pages of this newsletter) and send it to me - by e mail or snail mail - it doesn't matter as long as we get a raft of opinion. We will analyse the results and share them with all in a future issue of the newsletter / magazine.

I look forward to seeing a good turn out on Tuesday evening - see YOU there !!

Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary

07824628638 grantcullen@hotmail.com

Western Front Association, Chesterfield Branch

As the WFA reaches the year in which it will celebrate its 40th Anniversary it seems an opportune time seek feedback from Members and Friends about your ideas and suggestions of how we can develop in the future.

Your Branch Committee would welcome your thoughts and ideas ahead of forthcoming Branch Chairs Conference.

1. Are you a Member of the WFA Y/N

2. If No is there anything that would encourage you to become a

member?.....

.....

.....

.....

..

3. Which of the following apply (Members and non-members) to you, please tick all that apply

- I am interested in tracing my family history.
- I am interested in learning more about the Western Front in WW1.
- I am interested in learning more about the wider conflict of the Great War including the Home Front.
- I am particularly interested in the Army.
- I am particularly interested in the Navy.
- I am particularly interested in the RFC/RAF.
- I would like to see more talks on individual service men or women.
- I am interested in other combatants not just Britain and the Empire.
- I feel there is not enough emphasis now on the major battles of the war.
- I feel the Branch should organise more trips within UK.
- I would probably support the Branch if it organised a battlefield tour.

- I would like more talks on the period between the wars.
- I would like talks on a wider range of military subjects than just the First World War.
- I think the balance of talks provided by the Branch is about right.
- I understand how the WFA is organised and how the Branch network works.
- I agree that the magazines *Stand To* and *Bulletin* are worth the subscription alone.
- I use the WFA website as my main link to the Association.
- I follow WFA facebook and twitter.
- Facebook reminders of meetings are useful.
- I do not attend branch meetings.
- I find the Branch Newsletter useful.
- I find the WFA Podcasts useful.
- I have used the Pension Records.

4. If you are a member but do not choose to attend meetings would any of the following apply.

- I have difficulty travelling.
- I don't know anyone that goes.
- I have mobility issues.
- Work commitments tend to mean evenings are difficult.

We know that this type of survey is not a popular means of getting feedback but if you can suggest an alternative the Committee would genuinely welcome ideas.

If you have taken the time to complete the survey and would like to add any comments please do so they will be considered by the Branch Committee and if appropriate taken to the National Executive.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Chesterfield Branch Committee.

January 2020 Meeting

As is custom the first meeting of each year is in two parts, the Branch AGM, followed by the regular business, presentations, raffle etc.

Branch Chairman Tony Bolton welcomed a healthy attendance to the meeting, then called upon Jon-Paul Harding to deliver Binyon`s Exhortation. Tony then asked if all had received the minutes of the 2019 AGM and copies of the annual financial statement. He asked Branch Secretary, Grant Cullen, if he received any Notices of Motion or any notices of intention of any member to seek office - in addition to those sitting office bearers, all of whom had indicated willingness to stand for re-election. GC said that he had received no notices of intention from member(s) wishing to raise business at the AGM but had received three apologies for absence. TB then reminded members that only those who were fully paid up could take part in any voting. TB then asked if there was any omissions or corrections to the 2019 AGM minutes. There being none, members unanimously adopted these as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

All offices were declared vacant.

Grant Cullen suggested, that, as in previous AGMs, if members approved, to re-elect committee members *en bloc*. Members agreed unanimously.

It was agreed therefore the following be elected to serve as office bearers and Committee members for 2020. Tony Bolton - Chair, Mark Macartney - Vice Chair; Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary; Jane Lovatt - Branch Treasurer; Jon-Paul Harding - Committee, Andrew Kenning - Committee, Peter Harris, Committee.

Tony Bolton then called upon Jane Lovatt for the Treasurers report.

Jane stated that 2019 had been a satisfactory year for the Branch with an average attendance of 27 at meetings, a modest increase of 1 from 2018. Financially we generated a surplus during the year of £650 with reserves now standing just over £4300. In part this was enabled by several members being willing to share their time and knowledge with the rest of us at no cost to the Branch, or for a minimal fee. Speakers from outside the Branch have supported the WFA ethos by only charging reasonable expenses which the branch has been able to cover without any monthly meeting costs dipping into the red. Members were thanked who have donated books as raffle prizes - thanks also to those who support us at each meeting by buying raffle tickets.

During the year the Labour Club maintained the cost of hiring the room and given we enjoy free off street parking and access to the Club Bar, this represents exceptional value for money for the Branch. It was stressed that in order to comply with local licensing laws everyone who attends a meeting must become a member of the Labour Club on an annual basis. This cost is met by the Branch.

Jane asked that all members must ensure that they sign in on entry to the meeting and to ensure that their Club membership is up to date and that they are in possession of a current Club membership card. The suggested attendance donation has again been kept at £3 and has remained unchanged since the Branch was inaugurated in 2010.

Jane cautioned that we are a `not for profit` organisation and asked that members give some thought as to how some of these funds be spent.

Jane concluded her report by thanking her fellow committee members for their hard work and time, and thanked all members and friends for the continued support of the Branch.

The financial statements and the Treasurer`s report were unanimously adopted as a true representation of the Branch`s affairs, by a members show of hands, there being no one otherwise minded, with Tony Bolton thanking Jane for her efforts during the past year.

It was unanimously agreed that as a Branch we endorse and adopt the WFA Safeguarding and Protection Policies.

Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, then asked if there was any further business, there being none, he therefore declared the Branch AGM closed.

The Branch Office Bearers & Committee for 2020 is -

Chairman - Tony Bolton

Vice Chairman - Mark Macartney

Treasurer - Jane Lovatt

Secretary - Grant Cullen grantcullen@hotmail.com

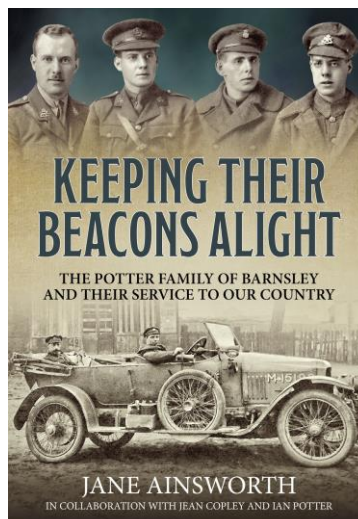
Committee - Jon-Paul Harding

Andrew Kenning

Peter Harris .

Some ordinary business was then transacted. TB drew members` attention to the Branch questionnaire / survey which had been circulated to all with whom we are in contact with. All responses to be in the hands of the Secretary by the end of the month. Jon-Paul Harding asked if the Branch could support the Chesterfield RBL Armed Forces Day, as we have done similar for Worksop RBL AFD during the past few years. Rob Nash advised that this would be held at Poolsbrook CP and that a presence of the Branch would be very welcome. Meeting agree that Branch would participate. There being no further business Tony Bolton then moved to introduce the first speaker for the night.

First into the limelight was **Jane Ainsworth** with a talk entitled `Serendipity`. Jane and husband Paul started attending Branch meetings last year and she is a regular contributor to our Branch newsletter. Last year she spoke briefly on the history of the Barnsley Pals Colours. Here is Jane`s presentation, in her own words.



"I would like to introduce Paul, my glamorous assistant, who will point out various items and photographs on my display.

I volunteered to give one of the short talks tonight on the understanding that my expertise is in family history research rather than military history. I bow to members here who have much greater expertise than me. I've already shared with you the knowledge I've accumulated in relation to the Barnsley Pals Colours so this talk will have a very different focus.

Fifteen minutes isn't long for a talk allowing some time for questions, which I'm happy to take at the end. I apologise for reading out my talk but this will ensure that I stick to the time limit otherwise I might go off at a tangent.

I am going to explain a bit about my background and concentrate on the happy coincidences that led to my research and the publication of my first two books by Helion and Company. *(I still find this amazing as, although I have contributed articles to Family History Society journals, Barnsley Chronicle etc for some time, I never anticipated that one day I might write a book, never mind have it published! I feel that my books form my legacy).*

My passionate interest in my ancestors developed after my father died in 2002, aged 80. He had relocated his four kids from Yorkshire in 1960 to take up a new teaching post in History and Religious Instruction at St Alban's Secondary School in Chorley. Mum returned to Primary School teaching when we were all at school. As we were educated in Lancashire we spoke with this accent, not Barnsley.

It is true that 'you can take folk out of Yorkshire but you cannot take Yorkshire out of them'. Dad always retained an interest in his roots, keeping in contact with his siblings and updating the current family tree. *(I have my parents' Yorkshire DNA).*

As a tribute to dad, I took over this role as otherwise I feared that our extended family would lose touch with each other. I contacted many cousins I had never met – I knew my aunts and uncles but as dad had been the youngest of seven all his siblings pre-deceased him. We exchanged details about each other and photographs. Over a couple of years, I met cousins in Barnsley, Sheffield and Dronfield; it was great to find that we got on well together and we are still in fairly regular contact.

Dad had some basic family trees onto which he had added personal recollections – precious snippets that you cannot get from public documents. I decided to flesh these out further, delving much further back and expanding sideways, giving equal weight to female and male bloodlines. I taught myself how to use Ancestry and other genealogical websites, joined Family History Societies and spent a fortune on birth, marriage and death certificates.

In addition to discovering fascinating stories about my ancestors, I learnt the value of 'serendipity' and 'random acts of kindness,' which I had not particularly noticed until I joined the family history community. I am very grateful for my positive experiences.

After retiring to Barnsley in November 2012, I was keen to become involved with a local project. I researched Barker Fairley for Barnsley Art on Your Doorstep early 2013 to endeavour to pinpoint the house in which he was born for a Blue Plaque. I then decided to do something for the Centenary of the First World War by uncovering the stories of men named on a Barnsley War Memorial to pay tribute to them. When I mentioned this to the then manager at the Cooper Art Gallery, she told me that Barker's brother Duncan Fairley was one of 76 Old Boys listed on the Barnsley Holgate Grammar School Memorial on display in the gallery. My choice of Memorial was made by this coincidence.

I donated an early draft of my findings to Barnsley Archives in summer 2014 and several relations of Old Boys enquired about having a copy. Barnsley publishers Pen and Sword declined my book and I was preparing my word files to get copies printed when I received an email forwarded by the Western Front Association from a member requesting help with research into the East Yorkshire Regiment. Being busy with my book, I almost deleted his email, but (serendipitously) felt I ought at least to suggest he contact Hull Family History Society. We exchanged emails about our respective projects and I was gobsmacked when

Duncan Rogers asked if he could publish my book. I had no idea that he was the Managing Director of Helion & Company, a leading military history publisher I was then unfamiliar with.

I redoubled my efforts to complete my research and find photographs of as many of the men as possible. I assumed that '**Great Sacrifice**' would be my one and only book so it was important to me that it was the best I could write to honour all those brave individuals. (It was the first of a series of books about schools published by Helion).

By chance a former Old Boy alerted me to a relation of the Potter brothers who had photographs of them. When I met Jean Copley, now 91, she showed me a treasure trove of Frank and Eddie's letters, documents and photographs that their older sister Elsie had lovingly preserved. It turned out that not only was Jean's first husband Elsie's youngest son but Jean's aunt was Eddie's sweetheart.

I knew that I couldn't do justice to this archive in '*Great Sacrifice*', which ended up almost twice the size originally anticipated, and I sounded Duncan out about writing a second book. Although my proposal to create a family story based round the 50 letters Frank wrote home did not fit into any of their usual categories, Duncan generously agreed to try something different.

Jean had lived with her memories of the Potter family intertwined with her own Goodyear relations for many years and she was grateful to me for my enthusiasm. When she took my hands in hers and said: "Thank you for keeping their beacons alight" I realized that I had the title of my book: ***Keeping their Beacons Alight***.

Jean told me that C D Potter and Sons builders still existed in Barnsley - one of the longest surviving companies since Goodyears Joiners and Carpenters had recently ceased trading, much to Jean's disappointment. I contacted the Managing Director who got in touch with Ian Potter, a major shareholder and great grandson of Charles Dalton Potter, who had founded the family business 100 years ago at Rhodes Villa in Doncaster Road. Ian's grandfather Harry and father Ralph had both worked as builders before taking over management of the company, but Ian wanted to become a Solicitor.

Ian inherited business records as well as personal documents and family photos but he had little spare time or interest in his family history before getting involved with my book during his retirement. It was very satisfying to me to observe Ian become fascinated with how many of his ancestors served in the First and Second World Wars and the different roles they played.

During the First World War, Charles Dalton Potter was a member of the Home Guard while four of his sons served – but only two, Harry and Alan, returned home. His youngest son was a Scout while his wife and daughters made comforts for the men, wrote letters, helped with fund-raising and performed at church events or concerts, playing the piano and singing. Many of their more distant relations and in-laws also played their part.

Ian's father Ralph Potter served in the Second World War and had a series of promotions up to Captain in the Royal Engineers. According to Ralph's Service Records, he was transferred as far afield as Iceland and India. His future father-in-law Thomas Greenfield had been taken Prisoner in the First World War and told his family how well he had been treated. Thomas' daughter Joan was called up and, amidst great secrecy, given a one-way rail ticket to Bletchley, where she worked as a Typex Operator for the duration of the war. His son Paul was a Wages Clerk in a local Munitions Factory.

Having signed the Official Secrets Act, Joan discussed her experiences with no-one until I met her with Ian in her care home. I could reassure her that Bletchley Park wanted to add the stories of those who served there onto their database and I gave Joan a copy of her certificate printed off their website. Fortunately, Ian was able to apply for her medal ('We also Served') and Joan felt proud to receive it in recognition of her war service. Sadly though, Joan died before my book was published. "

If anyone would like to find out more about the Potter family and see lots of great photographs, copies of '*Keeping their Beacons Alight*' are available from Jane at the special price of £15 (RRP £25). janemaa@hotmail.co.uk



Next up was **Ed Fordham**. Ed is a Chesterfield Borough Councillor and, along with our Branch chair Tony Bolton was on the Chesterfield Great War Commemoration Committee. He is vice chair of the `Friends of Spital Cemetery, is a local bookseller and an avid history researcher. Ed`s family originally hails from Suffolk and he has researched their participation in the Great War. His presentation was be entitled *`Gallant and Patriotic Sons: the story of Coney Weston and Barningham in Suffolk during World War One` 20*

Ed started by saying that he was always disappointed that, as a kid his grandfather, he was told, was in WW2, being born in 1910, great grandfather in 1875 but somehow his family had missed out on WW1. When he started doing family history - his grandfather died when he was 13 - he started digging around and he went to see his great-aunt who lived in a convent in St. Albans and it emerged that she had a picture on the wall of a cousin who had died in WW1. He was known as `Ebbie` which was somewhat odd but it turned out he was `Ebenezer` and it was clear there was some sort of `cloud` about him, no one knew much about him or spoke about him. Ed went back to the village in Suffolk where his family had lived and checked out the war memorials - there are two in the village - there being nine names on one memorial, twelve on the other and of the 21, Ed realised that he was related to about 14 of them, so suddenly the story had a greater relevance, so as he went around the village talking to residents who had been there a long time and he found in one elderly residents home a number of `Home Words` books, effectively religious texts, telling you how better it would be if you prayed enough whilst at the end there would be what was called the `pink sheets` lists of baptisms and marriages of the parish and Ed realised that these books - of which he now has almost twenty, listed generations of his family born 1885 til 1905 and that these cousins were all affected by the War. Ed starting `digging` about his cousin Ebenezer, very few photographs exist of him, the exception being that on his Great Aunt`s bedside and it turned out that Ebenezer had gone to War with his brother Eddie and there was also another brother Jack who was too young to enlist but who tried twice, being thrown out and sent home. Uncle Eddie had survived, a shy man, who had lost Ebenezer in the war and had also fallen out with Jack and had then lost his own son in WW2. Ed realised that there was something else going on, but the only other surviving branch of his family who would know anything about the war was now living in Scotland, having left Suffolk in 1921, again, the war drove them out. He found another branch in Australia, a sister who had seen one brother killed, another return with half his leg missing and Jack, the youngest having a breakdown. Ed began to realise that there was a side of his family he hardly knew but that had been `broken` by the war.

From this Ed started on a project, not just to record those who died, but those of the village who had gone to war but who had survived. 54 went, 21 did not come back and from this there emerged much more interesting stories. His grandfather`s cousin had been the schoolmistress from 1909 until 1929 and he found the school records. Ebenezer had joined the Royal Signals - why - well from his school records it says he was very good at maths. Subsequently he could put nicknames to the boys, others, who had often got detentions had become sappers, quite why he never found out. Ed found that by putting names and faces to the ones who came back he created new interest for their families. From these researches one chap Albert Seaman will now have a CWGC grave marker in the village. He came back, subsequently died of his wounds and

had just been quietly buried. Two elderly ladies from the village approached Ed - they did not even know that their aunt had been married to a man who had died in WW1. She remarried ten years later, had two daughters, but had never told anyone of her first marriage. You can imagine the shock of these ladies finding out about this - very emotional.

Ed also recounted the changes that took place in the village due to the war, the Lord of the Manor went from someone who was well respected, went to schools to make presentations but who later on was booed because he himself had not signed up to fight, indeed the village school threw him out. Ed goes back each year to talk to the schoolchildren, there being about 50 kids in the Primary school. He gives them all a playing card, gets them all to stand up, then as the soldier they represent in the war gets killed, chronologically, he gets them to sit down. It can be very emotional, especially when you tell them that the very schoolroom they are in, was the very room these soldiers were billeted in before they went to Bury St. Edmunds for training. This exercise awakened interest, not just in WW1, indeed two boys came forward to tell about their grandfathers, both Polish pilots in WW2.

Ed went on to say that the process of writing the stories of the people who *survived* was far more enriching for families, indeed in his own family everyone had remembered Ebbie, who had died but without detracting from him, no one spoke about his great uncle Eddie, who returned, leg missing, half his stomach missing who went on to farm for 50 more years, as well as losing his own son in WW2 - an people wondered why he was quiet and withdrawn. Ed got hospital records from Bury St. Edmunds released and analysed the treating of soldiers, the nursing records and if he had to do this again he would include the women who worked there, who did their war service in the hospital, this being something he regrets not doing originally. He mentioned three girls who got jobs in agents outfitters and the firm apologised in an advert saying that if you come to be measured for a suit you may be measured by a lady !.

One of Ed's great aunts lived in the Post Office and during renovations papers in the loft - a large quantity of them were found - relating to his cousins and other family, these just arrived at Ed's about ten days ago.

Ed said that he is active in Chesterfield with the marking of Remembrance Day, Armistice Sunday, all very important, but he said he also believe there are many stories yet to be told of those who served, survived and came back, and area of history, certainly of WW1 which has been rather neglected. There is a perception that 'generations' were wiped out...but 'generations' survived as well. No doubting the horrors of the war, but those who returned carried these memories. He recalled a distant cousin, John Henry Bloomfield whose letters, papers etc are deposited at the IWM and Ed has been the first person to go through all these and amongst theses there is one letter which describes a soldier getting wounded, being brought back to the French coast. His mother, for the first time in her life, leaves England, rushes to see her son, gets there and she is with him when he passes away. She then travels back to London stays overnight before returning to her husband in the village. In the meantime she and he have written to each other, the husband saying how he knows how bad his wife is feeling having not been able to make the journey as well, having to look after the farm and she writes back telling him not to worry. Seventy years later when the daughter dies, she had written 'I can never forget the moment my parents met, both knowing their son had died and would never be seen again'...this letter, which had been sealed, was opened for the first time by Ed, who upon reading it said he was overcome with emotion.

There are still at least a million letters in the IWM which have still not been opened - letters sent to soldiers, or sent by soldiers, which went undelivered. Ed said he had opened many of these letters, trying to unlock poetry by women, indeed over 400 letters were such. There is a

group of about 60, of which Ed said he is one who regularly visit the IWM and open and go through these letters.

Ed said that whilst he wanted to honour the dead, they died for those who came back.

Our third speaker for the evening, **Judith Reece**, a regular attender at Branch meetings had entitled her presentation

*“Can anyone ask Jesus Christ to help them fire a machine Gun?”**

After spending most of her life in nursing and research, both psychiatric and general, and later as a lecturer in these areas Judith retired about 9 years ago. She took up an earlier interest in history and particularly the study of firstly the Second World War at Birmingham University, where her dissertation was a study of issues raised by the significances of sheltering during air raids. Next came The Great War and Britain at Wolverhampton. Her dissertation there, allowed a return to consideration of theological issues last undertaken many years previously when she studied and was then ordained as a Baptist minister. This presentation arises from a dissertation submitted to Wolverhampton that considered three concepts relating to the expression of faith on some of the battlefronts and at home. The study considered the role of chaplains, and at home ministers, mostly Baptist of the faith, and certain Anglican priests. It explored how the concepts were used to maintain the war effort and offer some rationale for those facing death on a daily basis. Some of the material was drawn from local resources. *A Runcie “The God of Battles” 1986 (Personal Communication to Alan Wilkinson)

Unfortunately an IT glitch meant that Judith`s slides and illustrations to support her presentation failed to appear but she soldiered on and I think it was agreed that what she had to say would probably merit a very interesting presentation all on its own , rather than the brief fifteen minute slot, one of five.

Judy started by saying that her family never talked about anything, something she knew, and that was because there was a lot on `skeletons in the cupboard`, notably that her mother was six months pregnant when she married her father, the fact that they were Brethern a complicating factor. A great grandfather, who was never spoken about was a sergeant, another, an uncle who died, not in WW1 but in WW2, was never spoken about because Judy`s mother could not come to terms with the loss of her brother. Judy said that when you start delving into the archives, you think `Oh dear what am I going to discover`...and Judy discovered he was a victim of `friendly fire`.

Judy said that the talk was based - as some would know who had done the MA at Birmingham or Wolverhampton - upon the horrors of the Dissertation - and she had wanted to look at , not just chaplains but a comparison between Baptists and Anglicans the reason being that in her youth she had gone to theological college and for their sins they had to put up with her for four years. She said she had never studied history so that part of it had been a very painful experience. When it came to dissertation time she said she was struggling to find something and she came across a book when preparing to write an essay on Gallipoli which had a chapter in it called `The God Battles` and it was written by Robert Runcie, a past Archbishop of Canterbury who was a tank commander at D-Day. He recalled a comrades reunion and had got talking about the effect of war upon religious beliefs and this was what he said in a conversation with a chap called Jackson Page who subsequently died in 1987. The context being a lot of people who were pacifists thought that this was such an important war - I have to fight...

“ I did not have to be a pacifist to possess a conscience and a faith strained to breaking point and it seemed to be the breaking that allowed some men to keep their conscience”

Jackson Page was the son of a Methodist minister but who, upon enlisting facing questions which his faith could not answer, asked the question....*“Can anyone ask Jesus Christ to help them fire a machine Gun?”*

He concluded that only a negative answer was possible and proceeded to remove Jesus Christ from his mind and consciousness. To him the experience of war removed his belief, held from childhood that ‘God is Love’. Yet Jackson Page, despite his shattered faith, was deeply moved by the work of the chaplains in the war and felt that justice had never been done to their heroism.

Judy said that she grew up in 1960s London so she said, she was influenced by ‘Oh! What a Lovely War’ ...never to be mentioned in Gary Sheffield’s presence. What did chaplains really do?...were they a bit of a nonentity. Judith said she had been a Baptist since she was a teenager but was unaware that there was a whole group of Baptist chaplains in the First World War...Second World War, yes, because her own minister had served with Montgomery in North Africa. What it did trigger in her mind was how much did faith change as a result of the war, had it already changed, or, indeed, had it changed much at all.

There was a lot of books about by Michael Slade of Durham who had supervised her supervisor! The idea of ‘God with Us’ was a reason people backed the fighting had long been dismissed, the reason being at that stage the war was never seen as a ‘Holy War’

So, with all that in mind, Judith said she started to think about this...was it a ‘Holy War’?....was it a ‘War to end all wars’?...War to keep faith going...she wasn’t so sure. What she found was that in 1914 the Churches were very active in encouraging men to join up, now being a ‘renegade’ Baptist Judy thought...‘that’s the Church of England’ because, as she said, she had been brought up in such a strict home Catholicism was never mentioned. She was on a steep learning curve. Getting into the archives, she found something very important, in particular the Baptist times published during the war, that Baptists were saying the same thing, although there was a material difference in interpretation.

When war was declared both British and German theologians were attending a conference in Lucerne and were trying desperately to avert the war as they were the most ‘sensible’ theologians on the German side who were not taken in by the militarism of the German army. It turned out that the most senior person in the Baptist Union at that time was actually temporarily interned because, when the Germans started their troop movements in July 1914 these people were declared potential enemies and he had to find his way back to England. Meanwhile, in England, the Archbishop of London, Willington Ingram, made a sermon in Westminster Abbey, the day after war was declared in which it was reported he the sacred duty of every man to kill Germans which caused quite a storm. Actually, when you look at the archives in Lambeth Palace what he actually said it was the duty to kill Germans as they threatened the nation and Empire. So the Anglican justification for the war was not that you were killing the man..you were killing the idea.

As we all know, Douglas Haig was a devoutly religious Scottish Presbyterian and Judy said she could recall a Gary Sheffield lecture at Wolverhampton...who stated that Haig had said that if a soldier was to use a prostitute he should go to a prostitute who had been previously examined. So how he perceived, as a Scottish Presbyterian, that this was a ‘good’ war, Judy said she wasn’t sure.

Had her slides been working Judith said there was three things she had proposed to focus on, to compare between the Anglicans, the Baptists, the Front and Holy War, the men fighting and being killed, including chaplains - were they dying as `martyrs`. Judy emphasised she was not Catholic and apologised to anyone thinking this was out of order, but many Catholic clergy took the view that those (Catholics) who died in battle were `martyrs`. Was it `Martyrdom`, or was it `Dying for a Greater Cause`. Then we come down to the `nitty gritty, those who were killed, or not killed, was it Providence or Fatalism. If our soldiers had had Divine Intervention and a soldier killed a German but not the one next to him...had God nipped down and ensured that second man lived ? Was God directly involved in everything or not ?. How did people respond at home? - and Judith said she had spent a lot of time in the Derbyshire Archives that was the prevailing sense of the times. Genuinely religious men who were fighting knew they were in God`s hands, they didn`t have to worry, so if the bullet came for the next man, yes, they were sad for that man, but it meant for them, they were going to Heaven.

The chaplains did a wonderful job of writing letters to folks at home, the official letters sent to bereaved families were horrendous, but the Chaplains could convey a sense of meaning to the loss. The Baptist Chaplains emphasised, again and again, that they died for a greater cause...not necessarily the Empire, or Britain, they died to uphold pure Protestant Faith as characterised by Non Conformist Baptists.

Judith concluded by saying she travelled up to Oxford to further study the Baptist Times newspapers where she discovered that there was a fairly prevalent view among Baptists was that this was a Holy War because the war had been `decided` by a Higher Being - God - to punish the Nation for its sin and at the end of this war, when we would triumph, we would have been seen to have been `punished` and go on to live the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Certainly, for some extreme Baptists, it was a Holy War, indeed many of the letters that she had read conveyed a sense that the family being pleased that their son had died in their faith .

Judith sat down to a well merited round of applause.

Credit to our three presenters so far for keeping within their allotted time.

Step forward presenter No. 4, **Alan Atkinson.** . Alan needs no introduction to our members, a regular attender who made an excellent presentation on Propaganda in The Great War a couple of years ago. Alan`s presentation for the evening was entitled, `One Day in May` or `1918..the end, almost`.

Just to re-cap...`Are we there yet`...well not quite

1914 - Mons, Marne, 1st Aisne, `race to the sea`, 1st Ypres,

losses, stalemate, Coronel, Falklands

1915 - Western Front ... and elsewhere

Loos, Gallipoli, Salonika, Italy, Middle East, Africa

1916 - Somme, Verdun

Jutland

1917 - Paschendaele (3rd Ypres), Cambrai, Caporetto

Russia out, ... USA in!

If you are a `westerner` you will be thinking we can beat the Germans on the Western Front and indeed amongst the British High Command there was a thought that it might actually go into 1919.

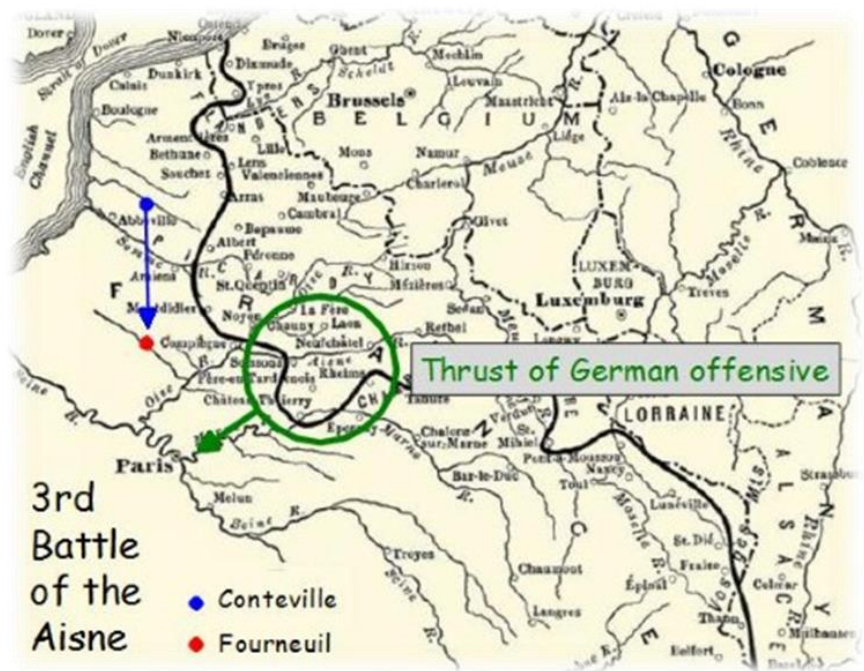
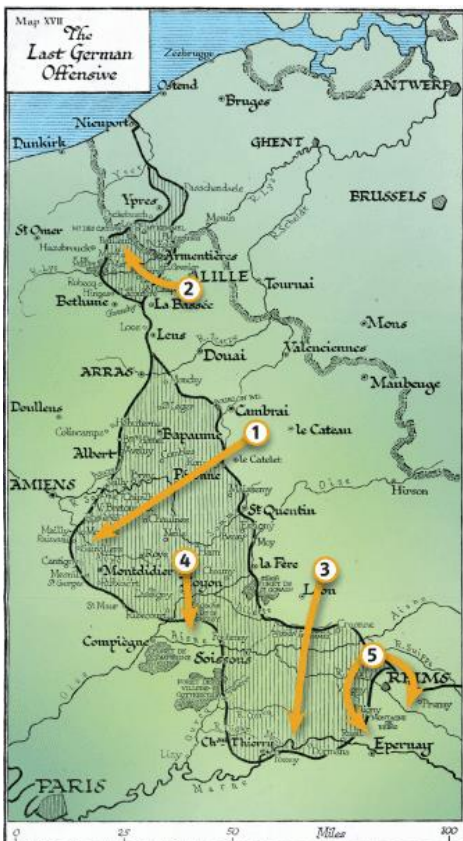
With the Americans coming the Germans realise that if they cannot actually win the war, they might be able to put themselves in advantageous position with respect to any meaningful negotiations so they have to strike a decisive blow against the Allies on the Western Front.



Meanwhile in Germany, social unrest, shortage of men, shortage of materiel, shortage of horses and...shortage of food. The `turnip winter` of 1917 meant it was `now or never` for the Germans. This led to the start in March 1918 of the `Kaiserschlacht` and Alan put up a couple of maps to illustrate this point

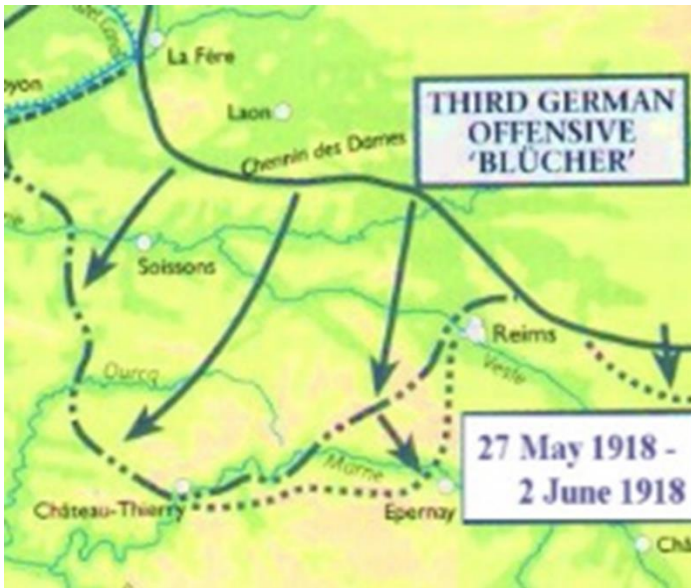
Blucher-Yorcke lasted from the 27th of May until 24th

June



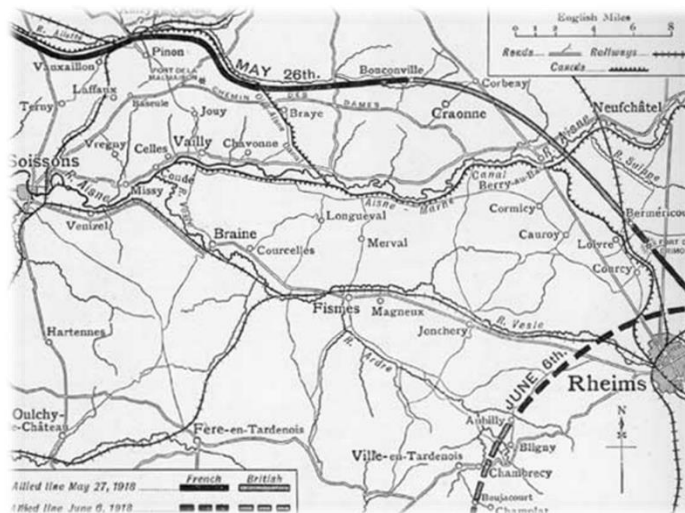
It started with an enormous artillery barrage, followed by a poison gas drop and this was followed by 17 German Divisions head by Stormtroopers and they quickly advanced 25 miles through the British lines and by 30th May they had taken 50000 allied soldiers prisoner and came within 30 miles of Paris but as usual they had supply shortages, fatigued troops, lack of reserves and mounting casualties. Again, the advances petered out. Alan, citing those who had done the MA courses at Wolverhampton or Birmingham, reminded folks to beware of big arrows on small maps but when you look at the amount of ground the Germans managed to take it looks

impressive but Reims, with its iconic cathedral was still in allied hands, Ypres, that last piece of Belgium not occupied by the Germans again, still in allied hands. Hazebrouck, vital railway junction, still in Allied hands. Amiens, almost as important as a railway junction, again, still in allied hands as were the vital channel ports, so the net result was the Germans had taken a lot of ground but gained little of value. Of course we all know that after this the allies counter-attack and the rest is history.



So, on 27th May, first day of Blücher-Yorcke the Germans push across the Aisne, 105 Field Company, Royal Engineers, are deployed to a place called Muscourt, are driven back with some men killed or captured. Muscourt overlooks the River Aisne, between Reims and Soissons

The day before they had been between Reims and Soissons River Vesle, where they had building nothing more dramatic range. They were given an order at 9pm and marched to arriving around 4.45am where managed to grab a bite to eat.



Jonchery close to the been than a rifle to move off Muscourt, they

They were at that fork in road south of Muscourt and Meurival, close to the River Aisne and its canal. Alan has not actually been there but has been 'on map' - Google Map

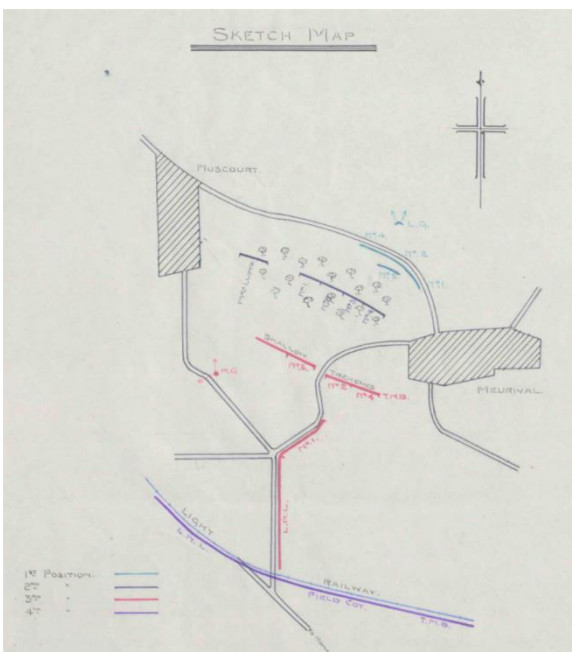




This map gives a rough idea of the terrain from the air, the fork in the road being clearly seen

Originally they deploy along the Muscourt - Meurival road, a distance of about a mile. At that time they can hear a lot of artillery fire and a lot of German aerial activity but, of course the BEF in this sector has no artillery or aerial cover to counter. About 9 - 9.45 they start to encounter French troops on retreat, infantry, minus equipment, minus rifles, beginning as a trickle, then a flood. This was followed by French cavalry...`at the gallop and in some disarray`. Close by was a battalion of men of the 9th Royal North Lancs under the command of Major Octavius

Darby-Griffith, of whom Alan said he would have more to say later. What appears to be more horizon blue uniforms in fact turns out to be `feldgrau` of Germans. The Engineers soon come under trench mortar and machine gun attack, the flanks are up in the air and the advancing Germans had crossed the River Aisne. They are ordered to retreat into the woods and no sooner had they done that, they are told to retreat again, what is referred to as a `shallow trench` but more than likely it was just a ditch in the middle of a field. They had a Lewis gun and a machine gun, but it runs out of ammunition.



This is the road - at the fork - along the side of which they were deployed.

Alan then moved on to discuss some individuals,



James Mycock

Born in Warslow

Aged 32

Lived at Dale Road, Buxton

Worked for Buxton Lime Industries

Married 1913, two daughters

Volunteer

to France November 1915

Killed in Action at Muscourt 27th May 1918

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial

Alan commented that it was quite remarkable that at 32 a married man with two daughters should volunteer so early in the - why - that we will never know - patriotic ?? 15 out of the Field Company were killed that day, 5 or 6 being junior NCOs.

Alan recounted that over 170,000 British soldiers became POWs during WW1. Alan then put up a picture of a young 2nd Lieutenant who was captured that day....

2nd Lieutenant **Alan Atkinson**

An 'exceptional' student of Civil Engineering at Sheffield University

Joined as a Sapper 1915

Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant late 1917

Returned to France April 1918

Captured at Muscourt 27th May 1918

POW at Karlsruhe, and then Dänholm-Stralsund (Baltic coast)

Arrived home in Sheffield 26th December 1918 via Warnemünde, Copenhagen, Leith, Scarborough and Clipstone.



That man was Alan`s Grandfather

Postscript



Major Octavius Darby-Griffith MC

9th Loyal North Lanc's

Killed in action 27th May 1918

Buried in CWGC cemetery at
La Ville-aux-Bois as 'a Major'

2018, grave identified and headstone re-inscribed

Next up, last, but by no means least was **Edwin Astill**. Edwin rarely misses a branch meeting, being a regular attender since the Branch was founded.



Edwin's talk was about his Grandfather Frank Astill. 7th Field Coy RE. including some WW1 pictures of him plus an IWM photo of a bridge his Company built in 1914 plus some Old Contemptible photos. Edwin last presented to the Branch in 2015 and has also had a book published, a History of the 1st Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment in the First World War.

Sapper (later Major) Frank Astill

1895-1976

Frank was born in Nottingham in 1895 of quite humble origins, leaving school at 14 to work in a solicitors office as a clerk and in 1913 joined the Nottinghamshire Royal Horse Artillery lying about his age although in fact he had joined the Territorials in 1911, something which punished him in later years as it affected his pension. Edwin has seen his paperwork when he left the solicitors in 1913 which said he was 'not interested in the work'. Subsequently he moved to the Royal Engineers and was with 7th Field Company when war was declared travelling to France on 22nd/23rd August. At that time 7th Field Coy. was part of 4th Division but the Division took part in

the battle at Le Cateau without their sappers. Edwin`s grandfather and his mates spent a lot of time running around in trains trying to catch up with their Division eventually meeting up at Nyon where they were billeted in the French Cavalry barracks (below)



In 2014 Edwin visited the site of those barracks to the exact day 100 years on from when Frank Astill was there.

During the Retreat 7th Field Coy was heavily involved destroying bridges etc, to try and impeded the German advance. When the Retreat ended it became their job reinstating bridges and crossings to replace the ones they had so effectively destroyed and Edwin put up a picture which he had found during researches at the IWM.



Bridge across River Marne at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre built by 7th & 9th Field Coys.
D Company 1st Scottish Rifles crossing 10 Sept 1914.

Maybe Edwin`s grandfather was one of the sappers lounging around nonchanantly on the pontoons ?



When Edwin visited in 2014 he was pleased to see a splendid memorial to the Royal Engineers where the pontoon bridge had been erected. The modern bridge can be seen in the background. The wording on the Memorial reads

“ At this point built under fire by the Royal Engineers of the 4th Division a floating bridge for the left wing of the British Expeditionary Force after the Battle of the Marne”
Edwin then detailed Frank Astill`s WW1 Army career

- Notts Royal Horse Artillery (T) 1911 - 1913
- RE Training Battalion 1013-1914
- 7th Field Company Royal Engineers 1914-1915
- 178 Tunnelling Coy 1915-1916
- 96 Field Coy 1916-1917
- Cavalry Corps Bridging Park 1917-1919
- With Chief Engineer IV Army 1919

You might think that as a clerk to a field company was a bit of a `cushy` number but when you think of the company office would have been close to the front line and Edwin said his researches brought home to him the sheer volume of paperwork that must have been carried out right up to the front - all the orders, details regarding pay, records of stocks of kit and equipment, inventories and requisitions - questions from `higher up` like `how many serviceable bicycles have you got ?` In short the Company Commander needed someone with some experience of clerical work to keep tabs on all of this whilst at the same time, Edwin recalled from conversations with his grandfather, he had to spend a considerable amount of time out in the trenches.

Edwin concluded by saying a few words about his subsequent career. After leaving the army he was Branch manager of a Labour Exchange before returning to the RE in the Second World War where he is seen in this picture with Edwin`s father, the Lance Corporal on his left, with his two brothers, all Royal Engineers. Edwin said he was proud of this picture



After 1945 Frank spent some time in Germany helping with the massive problem of refugees and displaced persons.

He was a keen member of the Old Contemptibles and there was pictures of, first, with two daughters in Ypres some time in the 1960s



When Edwin`s Grandmother died he retired to Bournemouth and he is seen in this last picture at the Bournemouth Old Contemptibles Standing Down parade



And that concluded Edwin`s presentation.

There was little time remaining for the normal Q & A session before Branch Chair Tony Bolton accorded our five speakers a most warm and generous vote of thanks, to which the attendees responded enthusiastically.

I have to pay tribute to all five speakers for the quality of their respective presentations and that all kept well within their allotted time span for speaking. As a branch this was the first time we have tried this format, and given we received no negative comments - indeed many positive, I have a feeling this `Members Night` may become a regular feature.



Winter News from the Cemetery

Friends of Spital Cemetery (FoSC)

Jan - March 2020



Pick a beautiful late winter day and a walk in the cemetery can be truly uplifting.

A Happy New Year to all our Friends and followers. We've a busy year ahead with regular monthly gardening and tours. We hope to see things happening at the Tool House. There are already exciting events planned for Heritage Open Days in September. This year the theme is Hidden Nature and our plan is to celebrate some of the nature hidden in this fabulous green space.

So much has happened last year for us to be proud of. I'm especially pleased to have made links with Don Catchment Rivers Trust who are doing wonderful work along the Rother and the Hipper and kindly organised a couple of bat walks for us. In September we're hoping they will be back looking for bats and moths this time but in the meantime check them out.

<https://dcrt.org.uk> We're so lucky to have

such fabulous work going on in our patch and I for one want to shout about it. Please keep an eye open for further details of all our events in our newsletters, local press, social media or email us. If you are not already, please think about showing your support by becoming a member. Liz Cook

So, what have we been up to this last quarter?

Service of Remembrance and Official Opening of the Gateway Path



Remembering the fallen from WW1 and 2 is a part of the work of the Friends of Spital Cemetery. Our event this year, held on Monday 4th November, was extra special as we were also opening a path, thanks to generous funding from Greggs, where we were remembering the men who returned injured and are buried in Commonwealth War Graves, those who 'did not return' and veterans. On the gateway path we are remembering in particular the families who bravely bore their losses and worked to create a peaceful world for their children. 2019 was the centenary of the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty that finally brought an end to years of

conflict and loss. For most of us these names meant little but Mary Coulson, Iris Sykes, John Hopkinson, Kate Parsons and Lyn Holmes shared a few moving words about the resilience of their relative whose name was read out.



Thanks too to the Mayor and Mayoress of Chesterfield for performing the opening ceremony, to John-Charles Tanner for playing the last post and reveille and especially to 12 fabulous children from Y6 at St Peter and St Paul School who put in labels on the roses and rosemary plants while a wonderful group of ladies from Chesterfield Town Women's Institute read the names. That wasn't all. They'd also make the cakes which were much appreciated when we went on for refreshments at St Leonard's Church Centre.

Thanks to Bereavement Services and the Cemetery Operatives for their support, to David Parsons for doing the beautiful carvings on the two gateposts as you enter the path, and to Leonie Mather and Andy Dillon without whom those 35 White Flower Carpet roses would have taken a lot longer to put in.

Christmas Tree Festival in the Spire - Saturday 16th November to Sunday 1st December



It was wonderful to be part of this festival again with over 120 trees, many from groups in Chesterfield striving to make this a good place to live and work. Some of my favourites were: the lovely little characters on the tree for tinytimtrust.co.uk, St Mary's Catholic Primary School had 24 ways to save our planet on their tree shaped pallet. chesterfieldtownwi.co.uk are not only fabulous cake makers but clearly skilled with the crochet hook too, it was knitting needles for the members of ct4tc.org.uk and as ever @SpitalArts showcased their creativity with a video of their events.

This year the Friends of Spital Cemetery tree was all about TREES. We have a wonderful collection of trees in the cemetery so the message from our tree was that there is growing evidence that trees and being close to nature is good for our wellbeing and also that trees can help us tackle the world's climate emergency.

Cemetery Tours

Santa added a very Christmassy feel to the last Sunday tour in the cemetery. Thanks to Andy Miles, Margaret Hersee and Catherine Longstaff for organising this and Karen Hopkins, manager at the local Co-op for donating the mince pies. General cemetery tours take place on the 2nd Sunday every month 1-2pm. Do let Margaret know you are coming, or to check details by sending an email to spitalcemeterytours@gmail.com



Gardening in the cemetery

On the second Saturday every month a very active group of friends come from 10-12.30 to rake paths and maintain some of the flower beds, in particular the island beds up by the tool house and the new gateway path rose-beds. Our challenge this year will be to manage the areas which have been left 'wild' for grass to grow and hopefully wild flowers, in our efforts to give wildlife a helping hand. If you would like to get involved with the gardening group please email Liz on thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com and put gardening in the subject box.



The Tool House and Co-op Funding.

A huge 'Thank you' to local Co-op members for supporting us.

This year we were one of the local charities and community groups that the local Co-op chose to support by giving us 1% of what was spent on own brand items by members who selected us as their cause. We were bowled over with the level of support from the local community, and we weren't alone as the Armed Forces Charity SAFFA and the Credit Union Charity all received very similar amounts.

We are now in conversation with the council about how this money, in addition to some we raised ourselves on market stalls and with other events during the year, is spent. We are hopeful that every penny will be spent wisely and that young building apprentices with the council building services will be given opportunities to develop their skills on this project.

Visit to the Mayor's Parlour

By: John-Charles Tanner JP

As the trumpeter for the Remembrance Day commemoration at Spital, it was a great privilege to have been invited to visit the Mayor's Parlour on Monday 16th December together with members of the Friends of Spital Cemetery and the Chesterfield Women's Institute in recognition of our work in maintaining the memory of all those local people who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars and who were laid to rest in Spital.

We were welcomed by Cllr. Gordon Simmons, the 394th Mayor of the Borough Mayor of Chesterfield and Cllr. Kate Caulfield, the Lady Mayoress.



Once inside the Mayor's Parlour, The Lady Mayoress guided us through the many historical artefacts and civic regalia associated with the Borough most noteworthy of which is the Mace dating from 1671 and a Royal Crown Derby tea service presented to the Town Hall and decorated with the Borough Coat of Arms. This tea service is irreplaceable and only comes out for special occasions such as Royal Visits The Queen has her own cup, incidentally ! There is also a fine collection of gifts offered to the Borough by its Twin Towns: Darmstadt (Germany), Troyes (France), Yangquan (China) and Tsumeb (Namibia); the latter having given a wooden tableau to commemorate the link. The Borough is particularly honoured to have received this gift as wood is considered as a highly precious material in Namibia. Our tour concluded with a visit to the impressive Council Chamber opened in 1938.

Membership. We have a small but growing membership. The visit to the Mayor's Parlour was the first event we have organised for Members and was much appreciated. A membership form can be downloaded from our website and lasts from January to December. The support of members is very important to a community group such as ours that depends entirely on volunteers.

Liz's recommendations:

Extraordinary Women: An exhibition celebrating the amazing women of Chesterfield and telling their extraordinary stories. 18th January - 28th March at Chesterfield Museum.

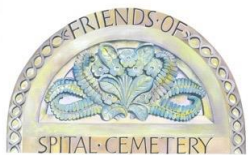
And, fortunately we don't have to go to London to celebrate the bicentenary in 2020 of the birth of Florence Nightingale, as Derby are putting on a few events because of her connection with the city. Check out <https://www.visitderby.co.uk/whats-on/events/florence-nightingale-comes-home>. Our one woman casualty from WW1, Nurse Fletcher, will certainly have found the work of Florence a huge inspiration. We also have one resident in the cemetery, Martha Robinson, whose role in the family business ensured that the latest design in bandages went out to treat soldiers in the Crimean.

Photos from the visit to the Mayor's parlour from John-Charles Tanner.
A longer version of the visit by J-C Tanner can be found in the news section of our website.

Dates for your diary Jan-March 2020

General Tours: Sundays Jan 12th, Feb 9th and March 8th. 1-2pm. Meet at the bottom gates. Please donate £5 to help us in our work. Book with Margaret, email: spitalcemeterytours@gmail.com

Gardening Sessions: Saturdays Jan 11, Feb 8th and March 14th. 10-12.30. All welcome. Contact Liz, email: thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com



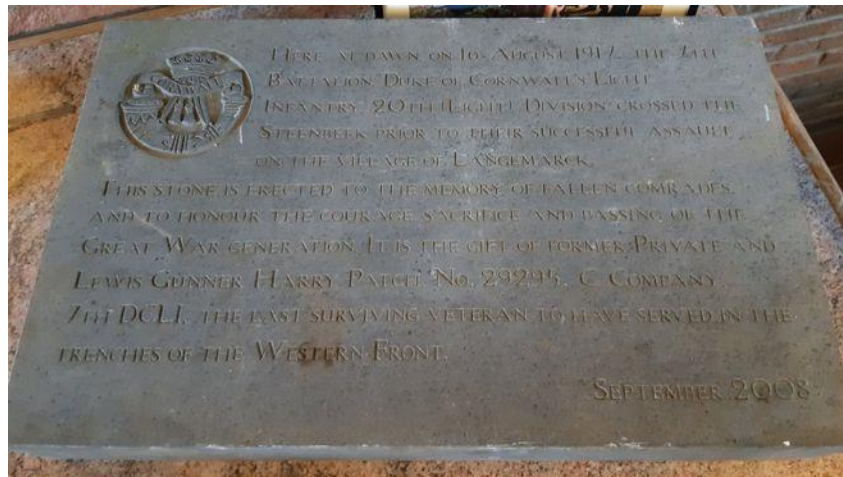
Friends of Spital Cemetery seek to promote Spital Cemetery as a haven for wildlife, and a place of remembrance, heritage and learning for the community.

<http://friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofSpitalCemetery>

email: thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com @FOSpitalCem

Missing WWI memorial stone laid by Harry Patch returned



A memorial stone laid by Harry Patch, Britain's last survivor of the World War One trenches, has been returned two years after it went missing.

It was believed to have been stolen in July 2018 and more than £3,000 was raised to replace the memorial three months later. Mr Patch, who died in 2009 aged 111, was present at the unveiling of the plaque in Belgium.

The returned memorial will be placed in Talbot House Museum in Poperinge.

Military historian Jeremy Banning, worked with the veterans and was a close friend of Mr Patch's, from Combe Down, near Bath. He said the plaque went missing on 11 July 2018 and was handed back on 18 January to Johan Vandewalle, the owner of a café at Polygon Wood in Belgium.



It was first laid in Langemarck, which is the site of one of only four German cemeteries in the western Flanders region of Belgium where more than 44,000 soldiers are buried.

The stone was dedicated in part for Mr Patch to mark the location where he went over the top.

Mr Banning has posted a thread on Twitter explaining how the stone was recovered. It is believed a lorry driver, who happened to be parked nearby, saw a local farmer "in his tractor reversing into the memorial".

The farmer had allegedly wanted to dispose of the plaque in a nearby river but the driver took it off him.

Mr Banning said the reason it had not been returned sooner was unknown.

Simon Louagie, manager of Talbot House Museum said: "The stone is very heavy but it's in great condition and ready to be displayed."

"Harry was a remarkable man with a message of peace. We have his bench in the garden 10 years on and people still use it to relax and reflect on his life.



The stone will go on display as part of the 'Garden Party' exhibition in Talbot House Museum in May.

Cromer low tides reveal 1917 shipwreck of SS Fernebo



The rusting remains of a World War One shipwreck have been revealed by low tides on a north Norfolk beach.

The Swedish vessel SS Fernebo was broken in half by an explosion on 9 January 1917 near Cromer pier. One man was killed by the blast, possibly caused by a mine, but the 17 other sailors were rescued by famed lifeboatman Henry Blogg and his crew.

"There are many people in the town who still don't know it's there," said Cromer museum assistant Alan Tutt. "It's only seen at very low tides, and it's about half a mile east towards Overstrand, so it's quite a rare sight. "I find it an evocative place because of the story behind it," he added.



Photographs of the Fernebo's remains were posted on the Cromer Museum Facebook page, along with an account of the rescue.

The 70-metre (230ft) long steamer was carrying a cargo of timber to London from Gävle in Sweden - which remained neutral throughout the war - when it ran into trouble in gales and rough seas in January 1917.

It may have been caused by a sea mine laid by a German U-boat or an explosion in the boiler room, said Mr Tutt.



When it broke apart, one half of the boat drifted with six crew on board towards shore, where the crowd of onlookers that had formed made a human chain to rescue them.


The 11 men on the other half were saved by Mr Blogg and his crew, who battled through rough seas in their rowing boat, the Louisa Heartwell, to reach them.

They each received medals from the RNLI for their efforts during the 14-hour rescue. The sailor who died in the explosion, engineer Johan Adolf Anderson, washed up east at Mundesley, where he is buried.

The museum in Cromer is named after Mr Blogg, who served for 53 years on the town's lifeboats, saving 873 lives in the North Sea.





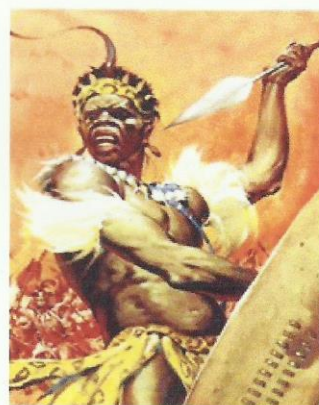
I recently came across this pamphlet produced a few years ago by the Royal British Legion - yes, I know it is not a WW1 topic, but I thought it was an interesting article on military history to share, shedding light on the facts of this famous event....certainly in comparison with the famous film 'Zulu'.



22nd to 23rd January 1879


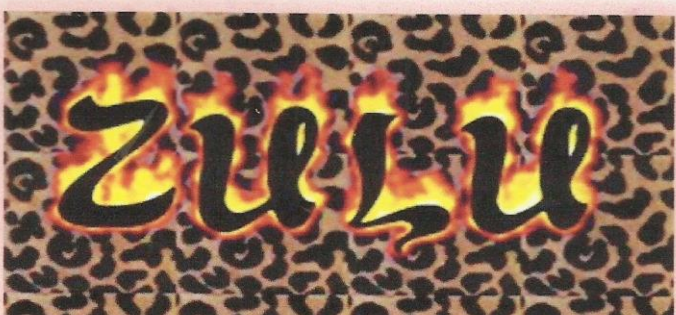

Rorke's Drift








Rorke's Drift, as it looks today, with the Field hospital in the top left

The 1964 film starring Michael Cain as Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead and Stanley Baker as Lieutenant John Chard brought to life a battle fought by a small contingent of 139 men of the British Army against the overwhelming odds of a Zulu army of over 4,000 men






This commemorative booklet gives an insight into the events leading up to 22nd January and of some of actual facts about the battle to defend Rorke's Drift and what happened to those involved after 23rd January 1879



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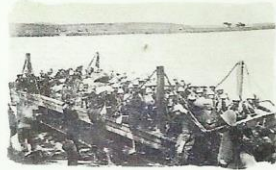


Summary of the events leading up to Rorke's Drift



On 11 December 1878, agents of the British delivered an ultimatum to 14 chiefs representing Cetshwayo. The terms of the ultimatum were unacceptable to Cetshwayo. British forces

crossed the Tugela river at the end of December 1878. On 9 January 1879, the British No. 3 (Centre) Column, under Lord Chelmsford, arrived and encamped at the drift. On 11 January, the date the British ultimatum to the Zulus expired, the column crossed the river and encamped on the Zulu bank. A small force comprising of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot (2nd/24th) under Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead was detailed to garrison



the post, which had been turned into a supply depot and hospital under the overall command of Brevet Major Henry Spalding, 104th Foot, a member of Chelmsford's staff. On 20 January, after reconnaissance patrolling and building of a track for its wagons, Chelmsford's column marched to Isandlwana, approximately 6 miles to the east,



leaving behind the small garrison. A large company of the 2nd/3rd Natal Native Contingent (NNC) under Captain William

Stevenson was ordered to remain at the post to strengthen the garrison. This company numbered between 100 and 350 men. Captain Thomas Rainforth's G Company of the 1st/24th Foot was ordered to move up from its station at Helpmekaar, 10 miles to the southeast, after its own relief arrived, to further fortify the drift. Later that evening a portion of the No. 2 Column under Brevet Colonel Anthony Durnford, late of the Royal Engineers, arrived at the drift and camped on the Zulu bank, where it remained through the next day. Late on the evening of 21 January, Durnford was ordered to Isandlwana, as was a small detachment of No. 5 Field Company, Royal Engineers, commanded by Lieutenant John Chard, which had arrived on



the 19th to repair the pontoons which bridged the Buffalo. Chard rode ahead of his detachment to Isandlwana on the morning of 22 January to clarify his orders, but was sent back to Rorke's Drift with only his wagon and its driver to construct defensive positions for the expected reinforcement company, passing Durnford's column *en route* in the opposite direction. Sometime later

Major Spalding left the station for Helpmekaar to ascertain the whereabouts of Rainforth's G Company, which was now overdue. He left Chard in temporary command. Chard rode down to the drift itself where the engineer's camp was located. Soon thereafter, two survivors from Isandlwana – Lieutenant Gert Adendorff of the 1st/3rd NNC and a trooper from the Natal Carbineers – arrived bearing the news of the defeat and that a part of the Zulu impi was approaching the station.



King Cetshwayo

Upon hearing this news, Chard, Bromhead, and another of the station's officers, Acting Assistant Commissary James Dalton (of the Commissariat and Transport Department), held a quick meeting to decide the best course of action - whether to attempt a retreat to Helpmekaar or to defend



their current position. Dalton pointed out that a small column, travelling in open country and burdened with carts full of hospital patients, would be easily overtaken

and defeated by a numerically superior Zulu force, and so it was soon agreed that the only acceptable course was to remain and fight. Once the British officers decided to stay, Chard and Bromhead directed their men to make preparations to defend the station. With the garrison's some 100 men working quickly, a defensive perimeter was constructed out of mealie bags. This perimeter incorporated the storehouse, the hospital, and a stout stone kraal. The buildings were fortified, with loopholes (firing holes) knocked through the external walls and the external doors barricaded with furniture.

The approaching Zulu force was vastly larger; the uDloko, uThulwana, inDlondo *ama-butho* (regiments) of married men in their 30s and 40s and the

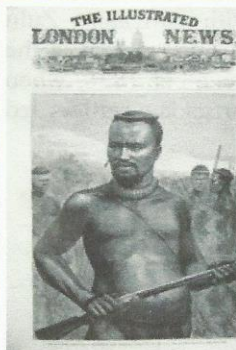


inDlu-yengwe *ibutho* of young unmarried men mustered 3,000 to 4,000 warriors, none of them engaged during the battle at Isandlwana. This Zulu force was the 'loins' or reserve of the army at Isandlwana and is often referred to as the Undi Corps. It was directed to swing wide of the

British left flank and pass west and south of Isandlwana hill itself positioning itself across the line of communication and retreat of the British and their colonial allies in order to prevent their escape back into Natal by way of ford of the Buffalo river leading to Rorke's Drift.



Isandhlwana



**Prince Dabulamanzi
kaMpande**

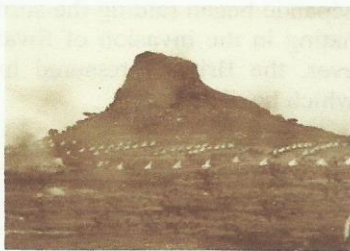
The Zulu Army was commanded by *inDunas* (Princes) Ntshingwayo kaMahole Khozalo and Mavumengwana kaNdlela Ntuli. The *inDuna* Dabulamanzi kaMpande, half brother of Cetshwayo, would command the Undi Corps after kaMapitha, the regular *inkhosi*, or commander, was wounded. While Chelmsford was in the field seeking them, the entire Zulu army had outmanoeuvred him, moving behind his force with the intention of attacking the British army on the 23rd.

They were discovered at around 8 a.m. by men of Lt. Charles Raw's troop of scouts who chased a number of Zulus into a valley, only then seeing some 20,000 men of the main enemy force sitting in total quiet. Having been discovered the Zulu force leapt to the offensive. Raw's men began a fighting retreat back to the camp and a messenger was sent to warn Pulleine. Pulleine observed Zulus on the hills to his left front and sent word to Chelmsford, which was received by the General between 9 and 10 a.m. The Zulu attack then developed in the traditional horns and chest of the buffalo, with the aim of encircling the British position. From Pulleine's vantage point in the camp, at first only the right horn and then the chest (centre) of the attack seemed to be developing. The Rocket Battery under Durnford's command, which was not mounted and dropped behind the rest of the force, was isolated and overrun very early in the engagement. The two battalions of native troops were in Durnford's line; while all the officers and NCOs carried rifles, only one in 10 in the ranks was armed with a muzzle-loading musket with limited ammunition and many of them started to leave the battlefield at this point.

For a few hours until noon, the disciplined British volleys pinned down the Zulu centre, inflicting some casualties and causing the advance to stall. Indeed, morale remained high within the British line. The Martini-Henry rifle was a powerful weapon and the men were experienced.

Additionally, the cannon fire of the Royal Artillery forced some Zulu regiments to take cover behind the reverse slope of a hill. Nevertheless, the left horn of the Zulu advance was moving to outflank and envelop the British right.

Durnford's men, who had been fighting longest, began to withdraw and their rate of fire diminished. Durnford's withdrawal exposed the right flank of the British regulars,



**A picture of Isandhlwana
taken during the action**

which, with the general threat of the Zulu encirclement, caused Pulleine to order a withdrawal back to the camp. Durnford's retreat, however, exposed the flank of G Company, 2nd/24th, which was overrun relatively quickly. An officer in advance from Chelmsford's force gave this eyewitness account of the final stage of the battle at about 3 p.m.

"In a few seconds we distinctly saw the guns fired again, one after the other, sharp. This was done several times - a pause, and then a flash - flash! The sun was shining on the camp at the time, and then the camp looked dark, just as if a shadow was passing over it. The guns did not fire after that, and in a few minutes all the tents had disappeared."

Although the time of the solar eclipse on that day can be accurately calculated to have been half an hour earlier than that.

The presence of large numbers of bodies grouped together suggests the resistance was more protracted than originally thought and a number of desperate last stands were made. Evidence shows that many of the bodies, today marked by cairns, were found in several large groups around the camp — including one stand of around 150 men. A Zulu account describes a group of the 24th forming a square on the neck of Isandhlwana. What is clear is that the slaughter was complete in the area around the camp and back to Natal along the Fugitive's Drift. The fighting had been hand-to-hand combat and no quarter given to the British regulars. The Zulus had been commanded to ignore the civilians in black coats. This meant that many officers, whose patrol dress was dark blue and black at the time, were spared. The British fought back-to-back with bayonet and rifle butt when their ammunition had finally been expended.

Of the 1700-plus force of British troops and African auxiliaries, about 1,300 were killed, most of them Europeans. Only five Imperial officers survived. The NNC lost some 400 men, and there were 240 lost from one group of 249 African auxiliaries. Amongst those killed was Surgeon Major Peter Shepherd, aged 37, from Leochel Cushnie, Aberdeenshire, who together with Colonel Francis Duncan had established the concept of teaching first-aid skills to civilians and had written the book "Aids for cases of Injuries or Sudden Illness". Some 1,000 Martini-Henry rifles, two cannons, 400,000 rounds of ammunition, most of the 2,000 draft animals and 130 wagons, impedimenta like tinned food, biscuits, beer, overcoats, tents and other supplies were taken by the Zulu. Of the survivors, most were from the auxiliaries. The Zulus had lost around 1,000 killed, with various unconfirmed estimates for their wounded.



**The Battle of Isandhlwana
from the Illustrated London News**

ZULUS

Military innovations such as the *assegai*, the age-grade regimental system and encirclement tactics helped make the Zulu one of the most powerful nations in southern and south-eastern Africa. , around 1818, Shaka assumed leadership of the entire Mthethwa alliance.

Shaka initiated many military, social, cultural and political reforms, forming a well-organized and centralised Zulu state. The most important reforms involved the transformation of the army, thanks to innovative tactics and weapons he conceived; and a showdown with the spiritual leadership, clipping the wings, claws and fangs of the witchdoctors, effectively ensuring the subservience of the "Zulu church" to the state. Another important reform integrated defeated clans into the Zulu, on a basis of full equality, with promotions in the army and civil service becoming a matter of merit rather than due to circumstances of birth.



King Shaka
Drawing (ca.1824)

Shaka was succeeded by Dingaan, his half brother, who conspired with Mhlangano, another half-brother, to murder him. Following this assassination, Dingaan murdered Mhlangano, and took over the throne. One of his first royal acts was to execute all of his royal kin. In the years that followed, he also executed many past supporters of Shaka in order to secure his position. One exception to these purges was Mpande, another half-brother, who was considered too weak to be a threat at the time.

Before encountering the British, Zulus first were confronted with Boers, for in an attempt to form their own state as a protection against the British, the Boers began moving across the Orange River northwards. While travelling they first collided with the

Zulu Order of Battle: Isandhlwana, 1879

Zulu commanders:
Ntshingwayo kaMafahle Khoza
Mavumengwana kaNolele Ntuli

Left horn regiments:
approx. 5,000 men
inGobamakhosi, uMbonambi, uVe

Right horn regiments:
approx. 4,000 men
uDudu, uNkhenke

Chest (Main Force) regiments:
approx. 8,000 men
uMkhulushane, iSangqu, uMlilo, uMhlango

Loins (reserve) regiments:
approx. 4,500 men
uThulwana, uGqoko, uDluyange, uNtando

Source: Isandhlwana 1879: The Great Zulu Victory
By Ian Knight, Osprey, 2002, p. 49



Ndebele kingdom, and then with Dingaan's Zulu kingdom. Dingaan suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838, when he attacked a group of 470 Voortrekker settlers led by Pretorius.

Following his defeat, Dingaan burned his royal household and fled north. Mpande, the half-brother who had been spared from Dingaan's purges, defected with 17,000 followers, and, together with Pretorius and the Voortrekkers, went to war with Dingaan. Dingaan was assassinated near the modern Swaziland border. Mpande then took over rulership of the Zulu nation.



King Dingaan
Drawing: (ca 1836)

Following the campaign against Dingaan, in 1839 the Voortrekkers, under Pretorius, formed the Boer republic of Natalia, south of the Tugela, and west of the British settlement of Port Natal (now Durban). Mpande and Pretorius maintained peaceful relations. However, in 1842, war broke out between the British and the Boers, resulting in the British annexation of Natalia. Mpande shifted his allegiance to the British, and remained on good terms with them.

In 1843, Mpande ordered a purge of perceived dissidents within his kingdom. This resulted in numerous deaths, and the fleeing of thousands of refugees into neighbouring areas (including the British-controlled Natal). Many of these refugees fled with cattle. Mpande began raiding the surrounding areas, culminating in the invasion of Swaziland in 1852. However, the British pressured him into withdrawing, which he did shortly.

At this time, a battle for the succession broke out between two of Mpande's sons, Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi. This culminated in 1856 with the Battle of Ndongakusuka, which left Mbuyazi dead. Cetshwayo then set about usurping his father's authority. When Mpande died of old age in 1872, Cetshwayo took over as ruler.



King Mpande



King Cetshwayo
Picture (ca 1878)

The New York Times

February 12, 1879

THE VICTORY OF THE ZULUS.

DETAILS OF THE BRITISH DEFEAT.
LORD CHELMSFORD'S OFFICIAL REPORT OF
THE DISASTER—THE TROOPS ENTICED
FROM THEIR CAMP AND ATTACKED—
ESTIMATES OF THE BRITISH AND ZULU
LOSSES—REINFORCEMENTS ORDERED BY
THE CABINET.

January 23rd 1879. The secretary of state for war has received the following dispatch from Lord Chelmsford Commander in Chief of her Majesties forces in Natal Province.



Major-General Lord Chelmsford

"I regret to report a very disastrous engagement.

LONDON, Feb. 11. — The following communication has been received at the War Office from Lord Chelmsford: "I regret to have to report a very disastrous engagement on the 22nd of January between the Zulus and a portion of No. 3 Column which was left to guard the camp, about 10 miles in front of Rorke's Drift. The Zulus came down in overwhelming numbers, and, in spite of gallant resistance by five companies of the First Battalion of the Twenty-fourth, one company of the Second Battalion of the Twenty-fourth Regiment, two guns, two rocket tubes, 164 mounted men, and about 800 natives, they overwhelmed them. The camp, containing all the surplus ammunition and transport of No. 3 Column, was taken, and but a few of its defenders escaped. Our loss, I fear, must be set down at 30 officers and about 500 non-commissioned officers, rank and file, of the imperial troops and 70 non-commissioned officers, rank and file, of the colonial troops. A court of inquiry has been ordered to assemble to collect evidence regarding this unfortunate affair, which will be forwarded to you as soon as received. The particulars as far as can be obtained will be sent in my dispatch which will reach you by the next mail. It would seem that the troops were enticed away from their camp, as the action took place about a mile and a quarter outside of it.

The defence by 80 men of the Twenty-fourth Regiment was most gallant. The remainder of Col. Glyn's column reoccupied the camp after dark the same night, having been with me, 12 miles away, all day. On the following morning we arrived at Rorke's Drift Post, which for 12 hours had been attacked by from 3,000 to 4,000 Zulus.



Col. Glyn

Its defense by some 80 men of the Twenty-fourth Regiment was most gallant. Three hundred and seventy bodies lay close around the Post. I compute the Zulu loss at 1,000 here alone. At the camp, where the disaster occurred, the loss of the enemy is computed at over 2,000. Col. Pearson, commanding No. 1 Column has been attacked, but repulsed the Zulus."



B Company (all lost)

The following is the full strength of the British column, a part of which was attacked by the Zulus: No. 3 Column (head-quarters at Helpmakaar, near Rorke's Drift) commandant, Col. Glyn, of the First Battalion, Twenty-fourth Regiment — Artillery — N Battery, Firth Brigade of the Royal Artillery, with 7-pounder guns; infantry — Seven companies of the First Battalion, Twenty-fourth Regiment, and the Second Battalion, Twenty-fourth Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Degacher;

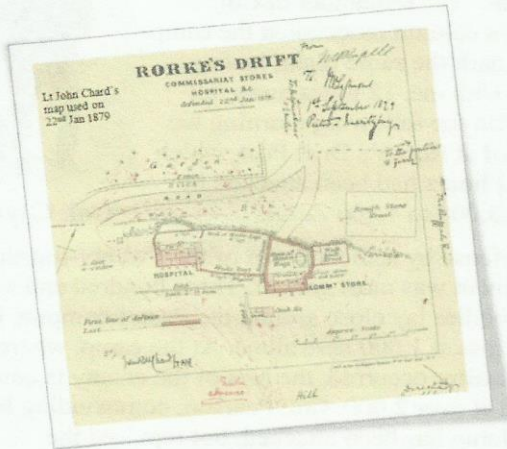


Lieutenant Colonel Degacher

the Natal Mounted Police and Volunteers, the Natal Carbineers, Buffalo Board Guard, the Newcastle Mounted Rifles — all mounted and averaging 40 men each — and the native contingent of 1,000 men, under Commandant Lonsdale, late of the Seventy-fourth Highlanders."

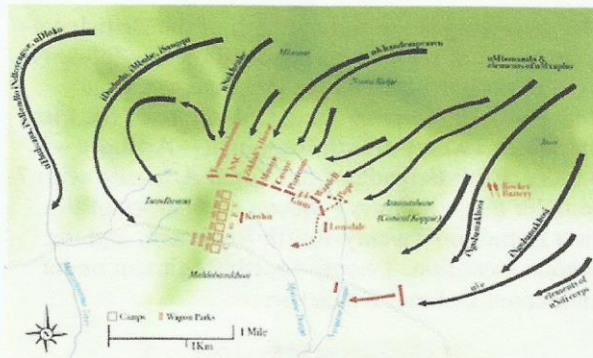
Battle Maps

The Zulu coordinated attack on the Mission Station at Rorke's Drift:

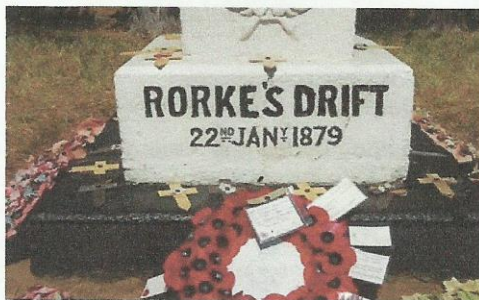


The map containing Lt. Chard's hand writing used during 22nd/23rd January 1879

The uThulwana, about 1 500 strong and the uDlobo, numbering some 2 000 had turned aside from the col at Isandlwana to make their way to the bend



of the Buffalo River where they crossed by means of forming a chain of linked arms and moved towards Rorke's Drift on the Natal side. The inDlu-yengwe which had been led by Usibebu had followed the fugitives, crossed in their wake, killed



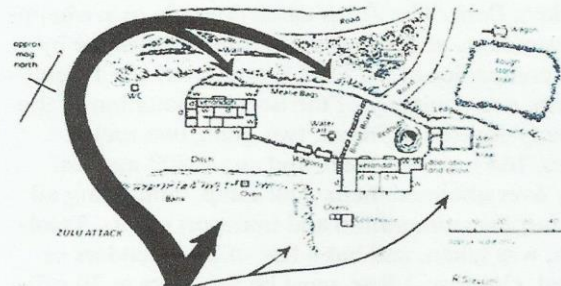
Melville and Coghill and turned north, burning kraals as they went. Usibebu was wounded and had turned back. The two groups met on a small knoll and advanced against Rorke's Drift under the command of Dubulamanzi.

The Rev G. Smith, O. Witt and Pte Wall who were posted on Oskarberg fled down the slope to warn the post. Witt did not wait to see the outcome but abandoned his property and left. The inDlu-yengwe appeared round the western flank of the



Oskarberg deployed under the rocky terrace and attacked the rear of the post suffering heavily from the concentrated fire. Losses were heavy and they withdrew to mass behind the trees in the garden, from where a second furious attack was launched on the south side of the post.

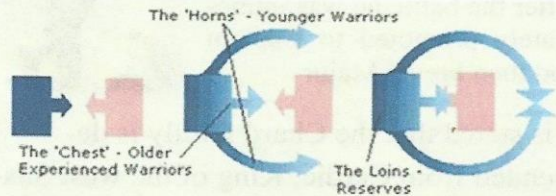
Here the fight reached a climax, the Zulus storming over their own dead to breast the ledge and the mealie bag wall. While this was happening some



Zulus took position on the terrace of the Oskarberg and fired down into the post causing some casualties to the British holding the south wall. Those British soldiers in front of the hospital were especially hard pushed and Chard pulled them in, closing the gap between the front wall and the building with a short wall. The Zulus poured into the space which had been evacuated and threatened the house which had empty rooms in front but no loopholes.

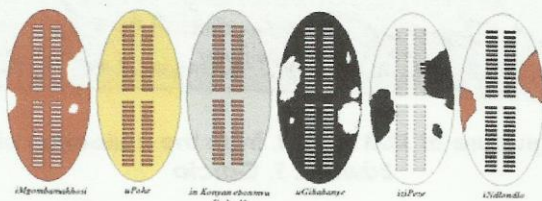
The Horns of the Buffalo

King Shaka of the Zulus was credited with arranging logistical support for his huge armies and arranged them into grades of regiment, each with their own distinctive names and patterns on their shields. Shaka was also responsible for developing the famous Zulu battle tactics known as the "Buffalo Horns" (impondo zenkomo). This tactic had originally been utilized by the Zulus for hunt-



ing but King Shaka modified it for battle with devastating effect.

The Buffalo Horns would see the Zulus separate their forces into four different elements. Each represented part of the Buffalo; the chest (isifuba), left & right horns (izimpondo) as well as the loins (umuva).



The Chest from the Buffalo normally would attack the opposing forces directly. This part of the Zulu impi would often consist of the finest warriors, tested in combat.

While the Chest of the Buffalo was holding down the enemy, the Horns would encircle them to the left and right, surrounding the opposition. Any survivors were given an opportunity to join the Zulus, the alternative was death. Those that joined the Zulu army became Zulus.



They renounced their past tribal loyalties and received complete Zulu instruction. The warriors making up the Left & Right Horns would commonly be made up of younger, quicker warriors who could proceed rapidly to get behind the enemy.



The rest of the Zulus, the Loins, were as a rule the mature, more knowledgeable warriors and were held in reserve to use whenever required. The reserve warriors would be retained out of sight of the fight and even turned away from the action so they didn't end up over excited and join the battle too quickly. Shaka Zulu or his commanders would monitor and handle their impi from high ground looking over the battleground and communicate their orders with several runners.

THE THIN RED LINE

Against the attacking army of 4,000 Zulus, 139 men of British and Colonial Forces stood to order late afternoon on 22nd January 1879 behind barricades of mealie bags and wagons awaiting their fate. The day that had started with the worst massacre suffered by the British Army in its history, would finish in just over 24 hours with the greatest single victory ever recorded. 11 British and Colonial men would emerge with the High honour available to a British soldier: the Victoria Cross; the most ever awarded in one action until that date. The 139 men that defended the Field Hospital and Mission Station at Rorke's Drift in Natal Province have gone down in the history of British Military lore as finest example of the British Soldiers' courage and training under the most extreme conditions. For the ones that God could not save: Let us never forget their bravery and courage.

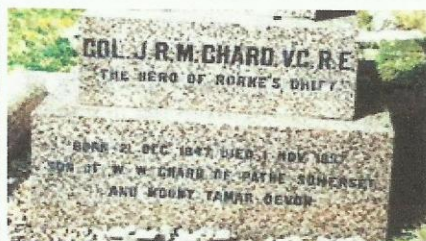


Lt. John Rouse Merriott Chard (Royal Engineers)



Born near Plymouth on 21st December 1847. His younger brother was a clergyman. He was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in July 1868. He served in Bermuda and Malta. He joined No. 5 Company RE in South Africa on 5 January 1879

He was born the son of William Wheaton Chard and Jane Brimacombe. He had two brothers: William Wheaton and Charles Edward, and five sisters: Charlotte Maria Herring, Mary Jane, Jane Brimacombe, Florence and Margaret Edith



He received the VC from Sir Garnet Wolseley at St Paul's, Zululand on 16 July 1879. Chard visited Queen Victoria at Balmoral twice in October 1879 and February 1880. He died of tongue cancer at his brother's home at Hatch Beachamp, Somerset on 1st November 1897, aged 49. He never married

Stained glass window to in St John the Baptist Church where he is buried.

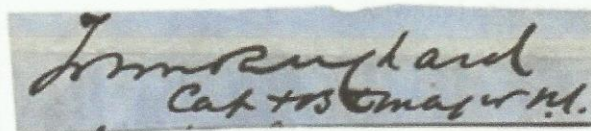


Chard is buried in the churchyard of St. John the Baptist, Hatch Beauchamp, near Taunton in Somerset. Inscription on his grave: "The hero of Rorke's"

From 1892 until 1896, he commanded the Royal Engineers detachment at Singapore as a Lieutenant Colonel and was made a Colonel in 1897 when he was due to be posted to Perth, Scotland. After the battle he was immediately promoted to Captain and then brevet Major



It is stated that the Chard family is descended from Cerdic, King of the west Saxons. This name has been corrupted to Chard and is recorded as such in the Domesday Book. The line includes Thomas Chard, the last Abbot of Forde Abbey, in South Somerset.



Signature of JRM Chard, from the collection of Edward T. Garcia

Chard was educated at Plymouth New Grammar School and before commencing his professional studies at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He spent a brief period with private tutors. On 18th July, 1868, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.



Lieutenant John Chard wearing his VC

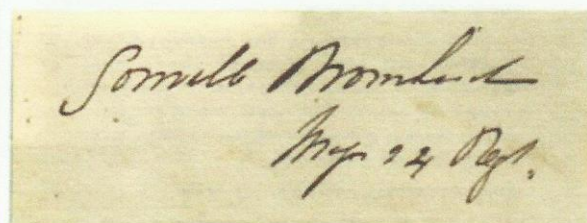
Why was he awarded the Victoria Cross?

For gallant conduct at the Defence of Rorke's Drift, 22nd and 23rd January 1879. Had it not been for the example and excellent behaviour of Lieutenant Chard the defence of Rorke's Drift would not have been conducted with intelligence and tenacity.

Lt. Gonville Bromhead (B Co. 24th. Regiment)



Bromhead was officially promoted to Lieutenant in October 1871. Aged 33 years and holding the rank of lieutenant he commanded B Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot (later The South Wales Borderers)

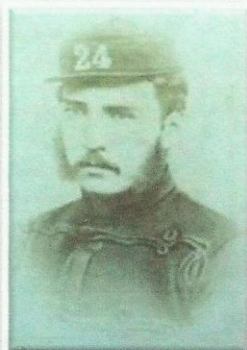


Signature of Gonville Bromhead, from the collection of Edward.T. Garcia

Gonville Bromhead came from a well-known military family. The family home was in Thurlby Hall, Newark. Born at Versailles in August 1845. Gonville Bromhead purchased his commission as an Ensign (2nd Lieutenant) on 20th April 1867. However, he would not attain the rank of Lieutenant until 28th October 1871, a rank which John Chard had held since 15th July 1868. Making Bromhead the junior officer at Rorke's Drift by three years and three months. He was aged 33 at the time of Rorke's Drift. Following the defence he was appointed a brevet Major

Why was he awarded the Victoria Cross?

Aged 33, he was second in command of the post, under Chad showing great gallantry throughout the defence of Rorke's Drift



The family home was in Thurlby Hall, Newark. Born in Versailles, France, Bromhead was of British descent. He had a profound deafness which restricted his promotion opportunities.



His mother, Judith Christine Wood, was Irish, being a native of Woodville, County Sligo. However, his father's home was Thurlby Hall, north of Bassingham, near Lincoln. He was educated at the Thomas Magnus Grammar School in Newark, Nottinghamshire.



He received his VC from Sir Garnet Wolseley at Utrecht on 22 August 1879. He later served in India and the Burma campaign. He attended two successful courses at the School of Musketry, Hythe. He died of typhoid, unmarried at Camp Dabhaura, Allahabad, India, 9th February 1892. (His VC is in the SWB Museum Collection)

He is buried in the New Cantonment Cemetery in Allahabad, Plot B-1, grave 66. There is a plaque and his name on the colour pole in Brecon Cathedral



Letters home

Part of Corporal Allen's letter to his wife

I am getting the better of my wound, more rapidly than could be expected. We got here (that is the sick and wounded) on the 26th of January, and have been waiting an ambulance to convey us down the country, which is expected every day. My arm is mending quickly, though I am sorry I cannot say the same for the other wounded men, who appear to be making no progress towards recovery. We are in a strongly entrenched fort here with two companies of the 1/24th, three of the 2/24th, detachment of the 13th, part of a company of the Royal Engineers, and a battery of Artillery.

Smith is still at Rorke's Drift, where the whole of the regiment and part of the 1/24th are assembled. Everything is quiet, and we don't expect any fighting till the arrival of troops from home. My dear wife, I trust you will feel too thankful to God for having preserved my life, to fret over what might have been a great deal worse. I feel very thankful to God for leaving me in the land of the living. Give my respects to your relatives and love to yourself and the children, from your loving husband.

4th February, 1879

Letter from 'Charles', purporting to be from an unidentified officer serving at Rorke's Drift during February and March, 1879 written to his mother. The writer was obviously a commissioned officer rather than an N.C.O. A sense of fear pervades the letter, evoked no doubt by memories of the British catastrophe at Isandlwana only three or four weeks before. Space only allows for excerpts from the 1st letter.

12 Feb'y [1879], Rorke's Drift Fort

My darling Mother,

You see by the heading of this letter that we are still at the same place but it is now dignified by the name of Fort instead of meaty bags. We have now strong high walls to protect us from the foe; I don't think however as they will be required for this purpose. We have not been honoured with their presence anyhow. Poor old Mums, what a state you must have been in on first hearing the news from here especially if the names were not published at the same time. I have written twice since to you; so I hope you will know in a day or two if you have not already that I am all right.

The other day some of the fellows here went out on a reconnoitring expedition & found the Queen's Colour of the 1st Bn in the river.

The Adjutant had galloped off with it, but the poor fellow was killed by the river. I don't remember what I told you about the fight before or what the numbers were on either side. Between 15 and 20 thousand Zulus attacked about 200 of our fellows left in camp.

It's impossible to say how many, especially as they carried away wagon loads of dead. Somewhere between 2 & 5 thousand, I should think. At the fight here, it is supposed that our 139 heroes were [word crossed through] attacked by 5000, & killed about 2000 of them.

An awful misfortune has happened. We finished the last piece of bacon this morning, so we shall have to eat ration beef (tough old ox) for [the next] week or two I expect, unless a blessed wagon appears. Best love to all at home.

Your affectionate son, Charlie

Letter dated 12th February 1879:

The following letter was received from Zululand, written by David Jenkins, son of Mr Thomas Jenkins, tailor and draper, Tanner's Arms at Davynock, and nephew of Mr W Davies, saddler of Aberdare, in which town the writer was well known:

Zululand January 26 1879

Dear Father,

Just a few lines to let you know that I am one of the few that escaped out of five companies. The remainder were cut to pieces - in fact cut in bits - with these savages. About 15,000 of them came on the camp when the column was out. All in camp were killed - 400 of our regiment and about 300 of different corps. Oh I never saw such a sight. Please to pray to God to continue to save my life. There are only 80 men remaining in our regiment. So no more. I shall write again soon if alive.

Dear Father, please go personally or write a letter to Isaac Lewis, Pondra, Brecon and tell him that his son is here. Sgt. Chambers is killed. His son Thomas is alive but still in hospital with fever. He had a very narrow escape. He crept on his hands and knees and came from the hospital to the fort through all the firing. Please give my love to all, and write soon.

Your affectionate son,

D Jenkins

Others involved

James Rorke: was of Irish origin from country Galway. His parents arrived at the Cape Town in the mid 1820s in mid 1840s James Rorke left the Cape to fight in one of the frontier war know as the Axe war. Rorke's father was an Irish soldier who



Believed to be the only remaining picture of James Rorke (seated in light coloured trousers) taken around 1860

had served in the Eastern Cape. James Rorke himself saw service in the Seventh Cape Frontier War. In he purchased a tract of land measuring a thousand

acres on the banks of the Buffalo River in Natal. The river formed a natural border between British governed Natal and the independent Kingdom of KwaZulu. On the river at the point close to where Rorke settled was a natural ford across, or as it is referred to in South Africa - a drift. A drift, which in time would bear his name. He married Sara Strydom and had two children.

James Rorke carried out a number of transactions during this period , King Mpande had permitted hunting in his country, receiving prior payments with a cannon, and many hunters use Rorke's Drift to take on provisions, ammunition and weapons, before entering Zulu territory. James Rorke became an officer in the Buffalo Border Guard. He ended his career with the Border Guard in 1873.

Bishop Schreuder a Norwegian Missionary began negotiating the purchase of Rorke's Drift in order to turn it into a missionary post. After living at Rorkes Drift for a quarter of a century James Rorke Sold his property in July 1875. Rorke's Drift was the occupied by Lutheran reverend of Norwegian origin, Kart Titlestad.

On the 24th October 1875 James Rorke passes away. The cause of death is unclear. Some sources suggest he died from a sudden illness, other say he committed suicide by shooting himself with his



Hans Paludan Smith Schreuder in 1865

revolver. James Rorke was buried at the foot of the mountain which was later renamed Oskarburg Titlestad. A Scottish missionary held the funeral.

After James's window left, Rorke's Drift was occupied by the Surtees Family and three years later, it was converted into a mission. Titlestad established ties with the colonists and the Zulu from the Qungebe clan who lived on the other side of the crossing. Titlestad sold the mission two years later to the Evangelical Methodist. Its new resident was Otto Witt.

Otto Witt (Missionary): In July, 1875, "then comes the missionary Karl Titlestad, a Norwegian missionary, was anxious to purchase from Rorke



Otto Witt
Missionary, Rorke's Drift
ca. January 1879

his trading post with a view to using it as base to preach the Gospel to the Zulus. Rorke was keen to accept the offer, but he did not live long to realise the profits. He died on 24th October, 1875 at the age of forty-eight at his trading-post after a very short illness. Some contend he shot himself in a rage. His widow eventually sold the trading post to the Norwegian Missionary Society

in 1878. A Swedish missionary, Otto Witt, took up the incumbency of what was now a Mission Station. Rorke's store was transformed into a makeshift church. Witt also decided to rename *Shiyane*, which he called Oskarberg in honour of the King of Norway and Sweden. Witt endeavoured to spread the cause of Christianity across the Buffalo River to the so-called heathen Zulus. But King Cetshwayo was wary of the methods employed by all missionaries, the king preferring to consort with European traders; his eye was on worldly goods, rather than heavenly wealth.



Walter Alphonsus Dunne
(Assistant Commissary)

Born 10th February 1851 in Cork, Ireland. For his action at Rorke's Drift he was mentioned in despatches. He was in further action in the Transvaal war of 1891-1892 and the Boer war in 1902. After 22 years of service he retired in 1903 in February 1908. He died at The English Nursing Home in Rome on 2nd July 1908.



24692 Second-Corporal
Francis Attwood DCM
(Army Service Corps)

Francis Attwood was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and immediately promoted to Sergeant for his actions at Rorke's Drift. He received his DCM from General Hugh Clifford VC at a special parade at Fort Tipton on 16 January 1880. After returning home, Francis Attwood married and continued to serve in the War Office, later in the Corps of Engineers. He died in London in November 1914 aged 33. His DCM and campaign medals are in the Royal Air Corps Museum, Hendon, London, Surrey.



Louis Alexander Byrre
(Acting Storekeeper)

Born in Ireland in 1837. For his action at Rorke's Drift he was mentioned in despatches. He was killed during the action, aged 25, while going to the aid of wounded soldiers. In recognition of his action he was given the name of Byrre. His body was buried in the Rorke's Drift cemetery. His name is on the memorial stone.

(Extracts from) Chard's report to Queen Victoria

Early in January 1879, shortly after the arrival of the 5th Company, Royal Engineers, at Durban, an order came from Lord Chelmsford directing that an officer and a few good men of the R.E., ... we did not reach Rorke's Drift until the morning of the 19th January 1879. The 3rd Column was encamped on the other side of the River Buffalo, and the wagons were still crossing on the ponts.

On the morning of the 22nd January, ... we arrived at the Isandhlwana Camp, went to the Head- Quarters Tent, and got a copy of the orders as affecting me, ... the orders also particularly stated that my duties lay on the right bank of the River Buffalo. An N.C.O. of the 24th Regiment lent me a field glass, and could see the enemy moving on the distant hills, and apparently in great force. Large numbers of them moving to my left, until the lion hill of Isandhlwana.

Camp Rorke's Drift - Camp Morning Orders: 22nd January 1879

1. The force under Lt. Col. Durnford R.E., having departed, a Guard of 6 Privates and 1 N.C.O. will be furnished by the detachment 2/24th Regiment on the ponts.
2. In accordance with para. 19 Regulations for Field Forces in South Africa, Capt. Rainforth's Company, 1/24th Regiment, will entrench itself on the spot assigned to it by Column Orders para.

H. Spalding, Major, Commanding

Major Spalding told me he was going over to Helpmakaar, ... Just as I was about to ride away he said to me "Which of you is senior, you or Bromhead?" I said "I don't know" - he went back to his tent, looked at the Army List, and coming back, said "I see you are senior, so you will be in charge, ...

... and was writing a letter home when my attention was called to two horsemen galloping towards us from the direction of Isandhlwana. ... one of them, Lieutenant Adendorff of Lonsdale's Regiment, Natal Native Contingent, asking if I was an officer, ... took me on one side, and told me that the camp (Isandhlwana) was in the hands of the Zulus and the army destroyed; that scarcely a man had got away to tell the tale, ... Lieutenant Bromhead had, with the assistance of Mt. Dalton, Dr. Reynolds and the other officers present, commenced barricading and loopholing the store building and the missionary's house, which was used as a hospital, and connecting the defence of the two buildings by walls of mealie bags, ...

Mr. Witt, the missionary, ... went to see what could be seen in the direction of the Isandhlwana camp. He saw the force of the enemy which attacked us at Rorke's Drift, cross the river in three bodies,

About 4.20 p.m. the sound of firing was heard behind the Oscarberg. The officer of Durnford's returned, reporting the enemy close upon us,

We had not completed a wall two boxes high when, about 4.30 p.m., Hitch cried out that the enemy was in sight,

and he saw them, apparently 500 or 600 in number, came around the hill to our south ... and advance at a run against our south wall.

The men were quite steady, and the Zulus began to fall very thick. However, it did not seem to stop them at all, ... It seemed as if nothing would stop them, and they rushed on in spite of their heavy loss to within 50 yards of the wall, when they were taken in flank by the fire from the end wall of the store building, and met with such a heavy direct fire from the mealie wall, and the hospital at the same time, that they were checked as if by magic.

A series of desperate assaults were made, on the hospital, ... but each was most splendidly met and repulsed by our men, with the bayonet. Then, as if moved by a single impulse, they rose up in the bush as thick as possible rushing madly up to the wall ... seizing, where they could, the muzzles of our men's rifles, or their bayonets, and attempting to use their assegais and to get over the wall.

... but I particularly noticed the behaviour of Colour Sergeant Bourne 24th, ... and many others. Mr. Dalton dropping a man each time he fired his rifle, while Bromhead and myself used our revolvers.

The garrison of the hospital defended it with the greatest gallantry, room by room, ... and breaking through some of the partitions while the Zulus were in the building with them. Private Williams, Hook R. Jones & W. Jones being the last to leave and holding the doorway with the bayonet, their ammunition being expended.

As darkness came on we were completely surrounded. The Zulus wrecking the camp of the Company 24th ...

Although they (Zulus) kept their positions behind the walls we had abandoned, and kept up a heavy fire from all sides until about 12 O'clock, they did not actually charge up in a body to get over our wall after about 9 or 10 o'clock. After this time it became very dark, although the hospital roof was still burning ...

... at about 7 a.m. a large body of the enemy ... appeared on the hills to the south west ... to observe Lord Chelmsford's advance; from there they could see the column long before it came in sight of us ... about 8 a.m. the column came in sight, and the enemy disappeared ...

In wrecking the stores in my wagon, ... a forgotten bottle of beer, Bromhead & I drank it with mutual congratulations on having come safely out of so much danger.

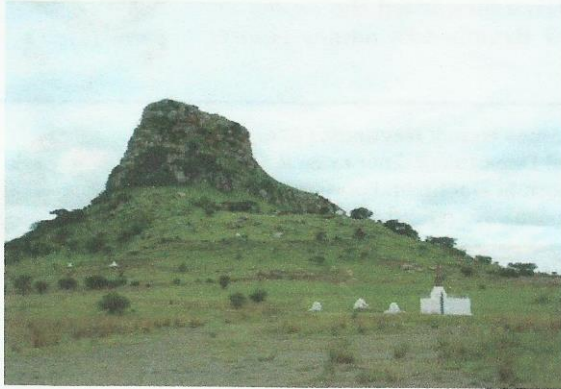
On the day following, we buried 351 bodies of the enemy ... I underestimated the number we killed, so I believe I also underestimated the number of the enemy that attacked us, and from what I have since learned I believe the Zulus must have numbered at least 4,000.

And to this may I add that they will ever remember with heartfelt gratitude the signs of approval that have been conferred upon them by their Sovereign ...

John R.M. Chard, January 1880

Rorke's Drift facts and fiction (1879)

Rorke's Drift: known as *kwaJim* ("Jim's Land") in the Zulu language, was a mission station and the former trading post of James Rorke, an Irish



trader. It was located near a drift, on the Buffalo (Mzinyathi) River, which at the time formed the border between the British colony of Natal and the Zulu kingdom.

The regiment:



The 24th Regiment of Foot is described as a Welsh regiment: in fact, although based in Brecon in south Wales, its designation was the

24th (The 2nd Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot. It did not become the South Wales Borderers until 1881. Of the soldiers present, 49 were English, 32 Welsh, 16 Irish and 22 others of indeterminate nationality.

The Africans: The attack on the mission station was not ordered by King Cetshwayo, as the audience is led to believe in the film. Cetshwayo specifically told his warriors not to invade Natal, the British Colony. The attack was led by Prince Dabulamanzi Kampande, the King's half-brother, who pursued fleeing survivors at Isandlwana across the river and then moved on to attack Rorke's Drift.

Fortifications: the wagons used in the barricades are seen to be tipped over. They actually remained upright, plugged with biscuit boxes and mealie bags so that the Zulus would have had to climb over the wagons to engage the British soldiers giving them more time to shoot.

Ending: The ending of the film is somewhat fictitious. There was no Zulu attack at dawn on 23rd January 1879, which in the film led to the singing



of "Men of Harlech". There was only sparse fighting with a few remaining Zulus. The Zulus did not sing a song saluting fellow warriors, and they did not depart peacefully. They departed at the approach of Lord Chelmsford's British relief column.

The men of the regiment:

Surgeon Reynolds is played as a middle-aged Irishman, whereas Reynolds was thirty-five at the time of the battle. During the closing voiceover, he is also incorrectly referred to as "Surgeon-Major, Army Hospital Corps"; Reynolds was of the Army Medical Department, and was not promoted to the rank of Surgeon-Major until after the action at Rorke's Drift. *Private Henry Hook VC* is depicted as a rogue with a penchant for alcohol; in fact he was a model soldier who later became a sergeant; he was also a teetotaler. While the film has him in the hospital "malingering, under arrest", he had actually been assigned there specifically to guard the building. The filmmakers felt that the story needed an anti-hero who redeems himself in the course of events. *Colour Sergeant Bourne* (1854–1945) is depicted as a big, hardened, middle-aged veteran; in fact, he was of smaller stature and, aged 24, the youngest colour sergeant in the British Army. He was called 'The Kid' by his men. Sergeant Bourne would not have worn medals on his duty uniform. Moreover, Green's costume has the chevrons on the wrong arm. Bourne refused a VC and instead requested a commission. He was the last British survivor of the Battle, dying a full Colonel.



Surgeon
Reynolds



Pte Henry Hook



Colour Sergeant
Bourne

Some of the true facts regarding the defence of Rorke's Drift on 22nd–23rd January 1879



The awards to Chard and Bromhead were unique; they were technically in breach of military protocol. Chard and Bromhead were not recommended by the commander in the field or their immediate commanding officer. They were recommended personally by Lord Chelmsford who added their names to the brief report from Lt. Bromhead to Col. Glyn praising the action of six soldiers of B company. Glyn forwarded the report to Chelmsford who added Chard and Bromhead's names before sending it to London.



Pte. Robert Jones (716 'B' Co. 24th. Regiment). Born at Raglan, Monmouthshire in August 1857

(**English/Welsh**) He enlisted into 2/24th on 10 January 1876 aged 19. He subsequently returned to farm labouring at Peterchurch in Herefordshire. There he married at local girl - Elizabeth Hopkins in 1885 and they had five children. In the summer of 1898, he complained of headaches. On 6 September that year, he was found dead with a shot-gun wound

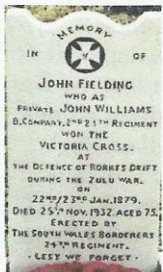


In Loving Memory of
Pte. Robert Jones, V.C.
late of the 24th Regt. South Wales Borders
who Died Sept. 6th 1898.
Aged 41 Years.
"Leave thy fatherless Children, I will provide them after and let thy widow weep no more"



John Williams (Fielding) (1393 'B' Co. 24th. Regiment) Born in Merthyr Road, Abergavenny as John Fielding (a **Welshman!**) He married Elizabeth Murphy and had 3 sons and 2 daughters; one son was killed while serving

with 1/SWB during the Retreat from Mons in 1914. He enlisted first in the Monmouthshire Militia in February 1877 but later that year joined the 2/24th He received his VC from Major General Anderson at Gibraltar in March 1880 He died in Cwmbran in 1932.



Pte. William Jones (593 'B' Co. 24th. Regiment). Born in Bristol in 1839. An **Englishman** who toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show! One of the founder members of the 2nd/24th. Served in Mauritius, Burma and India. Awarded the Long Service & Good Conduct Medal. Discharged at Netley Hospital due to chronic rheumatism on 2nd February 1880. He was unable to find regular employment. HM Queen Victoria awarded him his VC at Windsor Castle on 13th January 1880. He pawned his VC in later years. He died in April 1913 and is buried in Philips Park Cemetery in Manchester.



In Memory of
WILLIAM JONES, V.C.
DIED APRIL 15th 1913 AGED 73 YEARS



James Henry Reynolds (Army Medical Department, later to be RAMC) Born in Dublin on February 3rd 1844 (**Irish**). He retired from the army after

27 years' service with the rank of Brigade Surgeon Lieutenant Colonel in 1896. After the action, he was promoted to Surgeon-Major

and was present in the British camp at Fort Nolela for the final battle at Ulundi in July 1879 He received the V.C. from Colonel R. T. Glyn, C.B., during a special parade of the 1/24th at Pinetown Camp, outside Durban on Tuesday 26th August 1879. He attended a special dinner to honour holders of the V.C. at the House of

Lords in November 1929. He died, aged 88

years, at the Empire Nursing Home, London. Buried in the RC section of Kensal Rise Cemetery



James Langley Dalton (Commissariat and Transport Department) Born in London in 1833 (**English**).

Superintended the work of defence and was amongst those receiving the first wave of attack, where he saved the life of a man by killing the Zulu assailant. Although wounded himself, he continued to give the same display of cool courage throughout the action. He was 46 at the time of the defence. He enlisted in 85th Foot in November 1849 aged 17. He transferred to the Commissariat Corps in 1862 as a Corporal, and was promoted to Sergeant in the following year. It was largely due to his experience, which made the defence of Rorke's Drift a success. He received his VC from General Hugh Clifford VC at a special parade at Fort Napier on 16 January 1880. He retired from the army, with a Long Service & Good Conduct medal in 1871 after 22

years service. Died 7th. January 1887 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He is buried in the Russell Road Roman Catholic Cemetery, Plot E.





THE Queen has been graciously pleased to signify Her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the under mentioned Officers and Soldiers of Her Majesty's Army, whose claims have been submitted for Her Majesty's approval, for their gallant conduct in the defence of Rorke's Drift, on the occasion of the attack by the Zulus, as recorded against their names, viz:—

For their gallant conduct at the defence of Rorke's Drift, on the occasion of the attack by the Zulus on the 22nd and 23rd January, 1879.

Royal Engineers Lieutenant (now Captain and Brevet Major) J. R. M. Chard 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment Lieutenant (now Captain and Brevet Major) G. Bromhead

The Lieutenant-General commanding the troops reports that, had it not been for the fine example and excellent behaviour of these two Officers under the most trying circumstances, the defence of Rorke's Drift post would not have been conducted with that intelligence and tenacity which so essentially characterised it.

The Lieutenant-General adds, that its success must, in a great degree, be attributable to the two young Officers who exercised the Chief Command on the occasion in question.



Cpl. William Wilson Allen (1240 'B' Co. 24th. Regiment). Born in 1844, in a little village south of Berwick-on-Tweed in Northumberland (**English**). He was Assistant Schoolmaster as a Corporal in Brecon Barracks in 1876 when he



married a local girl - Sarah Ann Reeves in August 1876. Later he served as a Sergeant Instructor with the 3rd Militia Battalion in Brecon and the 4th Volunteer Battalion in Monmouth. Sgt Allen died still serving in Monmouth.

He received his Victoria Cross from Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle on 9 December 1879



Cpl. Christian Ferdinand Schiess (2nd Battalion, Natal Native Contingent). Born on 7th April 1856, Burgdorf, Bern Canton, Switzerland (**Swiss**). After the disbandment of the volunteer forces, he failed to find work. In 1884, he was found on the streets of Cape Town suffering from exposure and malnutrition. The Royal Navy found him, gave him food, and offered him a passage to England, which he accepted, but he became ill during the voyage. He died on board ship on 14 December 1884 aged 28, and is buried at sea off the coast



of Angola. There is a simple bronze plaque, shown at left, near the entrance to the rebuilt mission at Rorke's Drift to memorialize Schiess

Pte. Frederick Hitch (1362 'B' Co. 24th. Regiment). Hitch was born at Chase Side, Southgate, London on 29th. November 1856. A London Cabbie who only visited Brecon once. Died of pleuro-pneumonia and heart failure on 6th. January 1913 (**English**)



With Allen, he kept communications at the hospital open, despite wounds, allowing patients to be withdrawn. After his wounds were dressed, he worked through the night by dispensing ammunition to his comrades at the defences. He was 22 at the time of the defence.



Pte. Henry (Harry) Hook (1373 'B' Co. 24th. Regiment). Born at Churcham in Gloucestershire in 1850 (**English**) Died 12 March 1905. Buried in St. Andrews Parish churchyard, Churcham, Near Gloucester (**English**). He



first served in the Monmouth Militia and enlisted into the regular army at Monmouth in March 1877 aged 26. He purchased his discharge from the regular army in June 1880, but later served 20 years in 1st Volunteer Battalion,



Royal Fusiliers. He died of pulmonary tuberculosis on 12th March 1905 at Osborne Villas, Roseberry Avenue, Gloucester and is buried at Churcham. There



Garrison Roll of those present at Rorke's Drift during the defense 22nd to 23rd January 1879

General's Staff :

Mabin, G.W. Sergeant

Royal Artillery N Battery 5th Brigade

Cantwell, John. Gunner 2076, *awarded DCM*; Evans, Abraham. Gunner 1643; Howard, Arthur. Gunner 2077; Lewis, Thomas. Bombardier. 458



Royal Engineers 5th Company

Chard, John Rouse Merriott, *Lieutenant, awarded VC*; Robson, Charles John, Driver. 12046

2nd Battalion, 3rd (East Kent) Regiment of Foot (The Buffs)
Millne, Frederick. Sergeant. 2260

1st Battalion, 24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot

Beckett, William. Private. 25B/135, *died of wounds 23 January 1879*; Desmond, Patrick. Private. 25B/568; *Horrigan, William. Private. 1-24/1861, killed in action 22 January 1879*; Jenkins, David. Private. 25B/295; Jenkins, James. Private. 25B/841, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Nicholas, Edward. Private. 25B/625, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Payton, Thomas. Private. 25B/372

Roy, William. Private. 1-24/1542, *awarded DCM*; Turner, Henry. Private. 25B/104; Waters, John. Private. 1-24/447; Wilson, Edward. Sergeant. 25B/56

2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment (2nd Warwickshire)

Adams, Robert. Private. 25B/987 D Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Allen, William Wilson. Corporal. 2-24/1240, B Company, *awarded VC*; Ashton, James. Private. 2-24/913, B Company; Barry, Thomas. Private. 25B/1381, B Company; Bennett, William. Private. 25B/918, B Company; Bessell, William. Lance-Corporal. 25B/1287, B Company; Bly, John. Private. 2-24/2427, B Company; Bourne, Frank. Colour-Sergeant. 2-24/2459, B Company, *awarded DCM*; Bromhead, Gonville. Lieutenant, B Company, *awarded VC*; Bromwich, Charles. Private. 25B/981 B Company; Bromwich, Joseph. Private. 25B/1524, B Company; Buckley, Thomas. Private. 25B/1184, B Company; Burke, Thomas. Private. 25B/1220, B Company;

Bushe, James. Private. 2-24/2350, B Company; Camp, William Henry. Private. 25B/1181, B Company; Chester, Thomas. Private. 25B/1241, B Company; Chick, James. Private. 25B/1335 D Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Clayton, Thomas. Private. 25B/755, B Company; Cole, Robert. Private. 25B/1459, F Company; Cole, Thomas. Private. 25B/80, B Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Collins, Thomas. Private. 25B/1396, B Company; Connolly, John. Private. 25B/906, C Company; Connors, Anthony. Private. 2-24/2310, B Company; Connors, Timothy. Private. 2-24/1323, B Company; Cooper, William. Private. 2-24/2453, F Company; Davies, George. Private. 25B/470, B Company; Davis, William Henry. Private. 25B/1363, B Company; Daw, Thomas. Private. 25B/1178, B Company; Deacon, George. Private. 25B/1467, B Company, (George Deacon Power); Deane, Michael. Private. 25B/1357, B Company; Dick, James. Private. 2-24/1697, B Company; Dicks, William. Private. 2-24/1634, B Company; Driscoll, Thomas. Private. 25B/971, B Company; Dunbar, James. Private. 25B/1421, B Company; Edwards, George. Private. 25B/922, B Company, (George Edward Orchard); Evans, Frederick. Private. 25B/953, H Company; Fagan, John. Private. 25B/969 B Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; French, George. Corporal. 2-24/582, B Company; Galgey, Patrick. Drummer 2-24/1713, D Company; Gallagher, Henry. Sergeant. 25B/81, B Company; Gee, Edward. Private. 2-24/2429, B Company; Hagan, James. Private. 25B/978, B Company; Halley, William. Lance-Corporal. 25B/1282, B Company; Harris, John. Private. 25B/1062, B Company; Hayden, Garret. Private. 2-24/1769 D Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Hayes, Patrick. Drummer 2-24/2067, B Company; Hitch, Frederick. Private. 25B/1362, B Company, *awarded VC*; Hook, Alfred Henry. Private. 25B/1373, B Company, *awarded VC*; Jobbins, John. Private. 25B/1061, B Company; Jones, Evan. Private. 25B/1428, B Company, (Evan Cosgrove); Jones, John. Private. 25B/1179, B Company; Jones, Robert. Private. 25B/970, B Company; Jones, William. Private. 2-24/593, B Company, *awarded VC*; Judge, Peter. Private. 2-24/2437, B Company; Kears, Patrick. Private. 25B/972, B Company; Keefe, James. Drummer 2-24/2381, B Company; Key, John. Corporal. 2-24/2389, B Company; Kiley, Michael. Private. 25B/1386, B Company;



Lewis, David. Private. 25B/963, B Company, (James Owen); Lines, Henry. Private. 2-24/1528, B Company; Lloyd, David. Private. 25B/1409, B Company; Lockhart, Thomas. Private. 25B/1176, B Company; Lodge, Joshua. Private. 25B/1304, B Company; Lynch, Thomas Michael. Private. 25B/942, B Company; Lyons, John. Corporal. 25B/1112, B Company; Lyons, John. Private. 2-24/1441, A Company; Manley, John. Private. 2-24/1731, A Company; Marshall, James. Private. 25B/964, B Company; Martin, Henry. Private. 25B/756, B Company; Mason, Charles. Private. 25B/1284, B Company (Frederick Herbert Brown); *Maxfield, Robert. Sergeant. 25B/623 G Company, killed in action 22 January 1879*; Meehan, John. Drummer 2-24/2383, A Company; Minihan, Michael. Private. 2-24/1527, B Company; Moffatt, Thomas. Private. 25B/968, B Company; Morris, Augustus. Private. 25B/1342, B Company; Morris, Frederick. Private. 25B/525, B Company; Morrison, Thomas. Private. 25B/1371, B Company; Murphy, John. Private. 25B/662, B Company; Neville, William. Private. 25B/1279, B Company; Norris, Robert. Private. 25B/1257, B Company; Osborne, William. Private. 25B/1480, B Company; Parry, Samuel. Private. 25B/1399, B Company; Partridge, William. Private. 25B/1410, G Company; Pitt, Samuel. Private. 25B/1186, B Company; Robinson, Edward. Private. 25B/1286, B Company; Ruck, James. Private. 25B/1065, B Company; Savage, Edward. Private. 25B/1185, B Company; Saxty, Alfred. Corporal. 25B/849, B Company; Scanlon, John. Private. 25B/1051 A Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Sears, Arthur. Private. 2-24/2404, A Company; Shearman, George. Private. 2-24/1618, B Company; Shergold, John. Private. 2-24/914, B Company; Smith, George. Sergeant. 2-24/1387, B Company; Smith, John. Private. 25B/1005, B Company; Stevens, Thomas. Private. 25B/777, B Company; Tasker, William. Private. 2-24/1812, B Company; Taylor, Frederick. Private. 25B/973, B Company; Taylor, James. Lance-Sgt. 25B/82, E Company; Taylor, Thomas Edward. Private. 25B/889, B Company; Thomas, John. Private. 25B/1280, B Company, (Peter Sawyer); Thompson, John. Private. 25B/1394, B Company; Tobin, Michael. Private. 25B/879, B Company; Tobin, Patrick. Private. 25B/641, B Company; Todd, William John. Private. 25B/1281, B Company; Tongue, Robert. Private. 25B/1315, B Company; Wall, John. Private. 25B/1497, B Company; Whetton, Alfred. Private. 2-24/977, B Company; Wilcox, William. Private. 25B/1187, B Company; Williams, John. Private. 25B/1395, B Company, *awarded VC*, (John W. Fielding); Williams, John. Private. 25B/934, E Company; Williams, Joseph. Private. 25B/1398 B Company, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Williams, Thomas. Lance-Sergeant. 25B/1328, *died of wounds 23 January 1879*; Windridge, Joseph. Sergeant. 2-24/735, B Company; Wood, Caleb. Private. 25B/1316, B Company



90th Light Infantry

Graham, James. Corporal. 1123, alias Daniel Sheehan

Army Service Corps

Attwood, Francis. Second Corporal. 24692, *awarded DCM*

Army Commissariat and Transport Department

Byrne, Louis Alexander. Acting Storekeeper, (civilian attachment), *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Dalton, James Langley. Acting Assistant Commissary, *awarded VC*; Dunne, Walter Alphonsus. Assistant Commissary



Army Medical Department and Army Hospital Corps

Reynolds, James Henry. Surgeon. BA MB ChB, *awarded VC*; Pearse, Mr., Surg. Reynolds's servant; Luddington, Thomas Levi. Private; McMahon, Michael. Private. 3359, *awarded DCM*; Miller, Rowland H. Corporal.



3rd Regiment Natal Native Contingent

Adendorff, James. Lieutenant; Mayer, Jessie H. Corporal. A native of Mkungu's tribe, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Anderson, Michael. Corporal, *killed whilst deserting 22 January 1879*; Doughty, William. Corporal; Scammell, Carl. Corporal; Schiess, Ferdinand Christian. Corporal, *awarded VC*; Wilson, John. Corporal



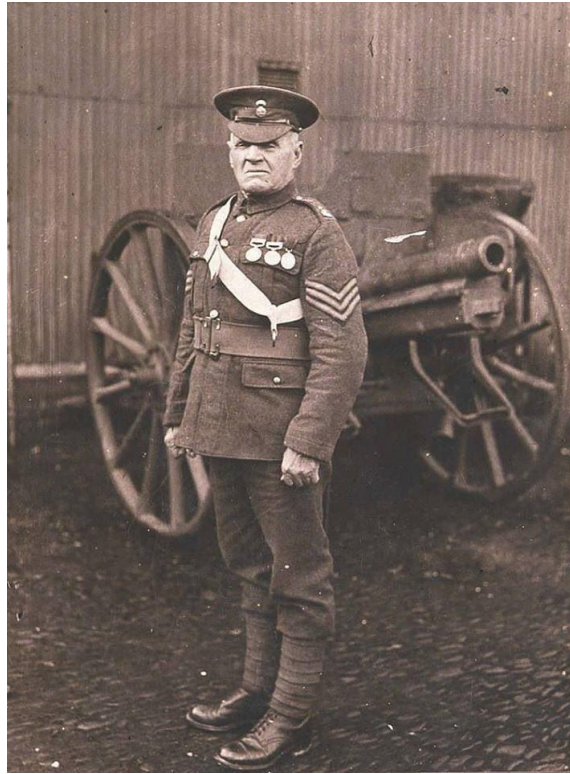
Natal Mounted Police

Green, Robert S. Trooper; Hunter, Sydney H. Trooper, *killed in action 22 January 1879*; Lugg, Henry. Trooper.

Chaplain

Smith, George. The Reverend; The Rev Smith's native servant

Sgt Evan Jones - a Rorke's Drift defender and an Old Contemptible Survivor of the Great War



Some speak of themselves as being "salty". But few will ever be as salty as Sergeant Evan Jones of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He was born Patrick Cosgrove in 1859 in the small parish of Bedwellty, Wales. At the age of 18, he enlisted in the British Army under the name "Evan Jones", perhaps to escape the wrath of an angry father of a pretty daughter.

2 years later, he found himself in Natal with the "B" Company, the 24th Warwickshire in a little mission station called Rourke's Drift. What would happen to him and 150 comrades on 22 January 1879 would be forever remembered in military history. Through sheer grit and discipline, the malnourished, sick and understrength garrison of Victorian soldiers fended off a force of almost 4,000 Zulu warriors armed with spears and captured British rifles. The action is remembered as one of the greatest last stands in military history, and the 20-year-old Evan Jones' name was forever immortalized for having been one of the warriors at Rourke's Drift.

Like many of his comrades at Rourke's Drift, Jones remained in the British Army and served in India. Many of his comrades, including those several of the 11 who had been awarded the Victoria Cross met untimely demises serving there. Disease and hard living took their toll on these veterans. Through it all, Jones stayed alive, fighting through another campaign against Burmese rebels in 1887 until 1889. By the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Jones was one of the very few original Rourke's Drift survivors. He was still in the army serving with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and would deploy to the Western Front. Likely due to his advanced age, he was a regimental drummer as indicated by the white sash in this 1918 photograph. Like many other bandsmen in infantry regiments, he would be pressed into service regularly at the front lines to serve a stretcher bearer and orderly. In 1920, after 43 years in the army, Sergeant Evan Jones 25B/1428 was discharged. Among his many campaign medals were the British War Medal, British Victory Medal South Africa Medal (1877-8-9), India General Service Medal 1854 (Burma 1887-89), and a Territorial Efficiency Medal.

Jones spent the last years of his life with his wife Alice and four adopted children. He died in 1930, but without any doubt would have tried to enlist again in 1939.