

**BULLETIN ISSUE NO. 2 – JULY 2023**



**Colonel  
Albert Cantrell Cantrell-Hubbersty  
1<sup>st</sup> Nottinghamshire Rifle Volunteers  
(Robin Hood Rifles)**

# Welcome

Ladies & Gents,

Welcome to this July edition of the *HistoryFare Bulletin* and I hope you enjoyed reading the first issue, sent a couple of few weeks ago.

As mentioned in the last edition, if you come across anything that has a military connection to Melton and you think it will be of interest to other readers, then please send it in to me and I will endeavour to include it hopefully in the next edition.

It will also include details of any future events such as talks, tours etc. Let's promote our local military history so it is kept alive for future generations.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our next meeting.

Brian

## Next Monthly Meeting

Our next monthly meeting will be on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023** at the Melton Mowbray Royal Air Forces Association Tornado Club, Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0HR at 20:00Hrs.

**Admission Cost £3**

**Seats are to be reserved by email:**  
**meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com**

David Harvey will be our guest speaker and the presentation will be titled "**The battlefield you have visited most, without knowing it!**" about one of the most influential battles during the Wars of the Roses: The Battle of Losecoat sometimes referred to as The Battle of Empingham.



## Raffle



At our monthly meetings, I will now be introducing an interval to our talks where I will be holding a raffle prize draw. Tickets will be £1/strip.

If you would like to support this raffle by donating prizes for use in either this draw or future draws, then they will be gratefully appreciated.

Biscuits, chocolates, wine, beer etc are all acceptable providing they are in date! Books and partwork etc will also be accepted.

## Colonel Albert Cantrell Cantrell-Hubbersty



The image on the front-page features Colonel Albert Cantrell Cantrell-Hubbersty of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nottinghamshire Rifle Volunteers (Robin Hood Rifles)

Colonel Cantrell-Hubbersty is the second son of the late Mr. Phillip Hubbersty, of Wirksworth, who married Ann Augusta, daughter and sole heiress of the late Mr. W. Cantrell, M.A., of Alveston Field, Derby.

He was born in 1843 and was educated at Repton. In 1876 he married Martha Lydie, second daughter of the late Mr. W. Jessop, of Butterley Hall, Derby. His son, Mr. W.P. Cantrell-Hubbersty holds a commission in the 15th King's Hussars.

He was a Justice of the Peace for the Counties of Derby and Notts; Colonel commanding 1<sup>st</sup> Nottinghamshire Rifle Volunteers (Robin Hood Rifles); Lord of the Manor of Rocklveston, and Patron of the living of Tollerton ; late Major and Hon. Lieut.-Colonel, 3rd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment; on roll High Sheriff, 1903; assumed the additional surname and arms of Cantrell by Royal Licence, 1894; Chairman, Buxton Lime Firms, Ltd.; Director, Nottingham Joint Stock Bank; Director, Digby Colliery Company, Ltd., etc.

Formerly he was a major and subsequently Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel of the 3rd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment. As a Colonel, he took over the Command of the Robin Hoods from Colonel Seely on June 22nd, 1892, a position that he held for 16 years, a proud part in the history of the regiment.

He was a popular officer in the best sense of the word, and has combined with the maximum of sound military training a good deal of enjoyment for the men. His first camp was at Wainfleet, and the Regiment was been indebted to him for many pleasant camps since.

When Colonel Cantrell-Hubbersty took over the command the Robin Hoods consisted of one battalion, but during the stress of the Boer War he was able by means of the enthusiasm of the citizens at that time to increase the regiment to two battalions, and at one time the strength was fully 2,000. Another thing for which the Robin Hoods were greatly indebted to their commanding officer was the provision for their use of the magnificent range at Trent, which is one of the best in the country. At that time the Robin Hoods had no range of their own upon which to fire, and it was largely owing to Colonel Cantrell-Hubbersty's keenness and enthusiasm in the interests of his command that the Trent range was secured.

The year 1908 saw the formation of the Territorial Force, created to take over the county Volunteer Regiments, and form a reserve for the army. The locally raised volunteer regiments were now to be under the direction of the War Office. The Commanders and Officers of the regiments were asked to transfer to the new Territorial Force and some decided not to follow that course. Colonel A.C. Cantrell-Hubbersty was one of those who chose to resign their position.

In the same year of his retirement, he bought Ragdale Hall, 8 miles from Melton Mowbray. The Cantrell-Hubbersty family ran the Hall and estates for the next 50 years and, being a fervent hunting family, were the mainstay of the Quorn Hunt and kept fox-hunting alive in Leicestershire through two World Wars.

He died at Ragdale Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1915 and is buried at Ragdale Church.



# RAF Hunter Crashes on ATP Test Track

Flt Lt Ian Firth was based at RAF Wittering serving as a pilot on No 58 Squadron. On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1974, he was at the controls of Hunter FGA9 XG130 '61' of 45 Squadron when he lost control of the aircraft after becoming disorientated while in cloud and ejected.



The aircraft crashed into a wooded area at Tunnel Farm close to a derelict house near Grimston, a few miles from Melton Mowbray. On impact, the aircraft carved a crater 50ft long by 15ft deep with the airframe breaking into pieces scattered across the countryside.

Trees were blown down by the explosion and the aircraft nose and engine were thrown onto the Melton-Nottingham railway line. The track was no longer used for passenger and goods trains but was being used as the British Rail Test Track testing the new Advanced Passenger Train.

The aircraft was from RAF Wittering but on detachment at RAF Cottesmore. It was shortly after taking off from Cottesmore that the aircraft developed troubles which the pilot thought serious enough for him to eject.



The pilot ejected safely and landed safely, North of Melton. He was taken to the Melton War Memorial for a check-up and to have his cut face treated. The pilot landed in the John Ferneley school playing fields whilst the ejector seat came down in the vet camp. The canopy crashed down into the roof of 31 Lynton Road.

A crash guard was sent overnight from Wittering and the wreckage was cleared by RAF Benson crash recovery team the next day. Some of the wreckage still remains buried deep in impact area.

Fred Holmewood recalls his memories on the old-dalby.com website

“When I was at Ferneley High School in the 1970s (1971-1974) sometime between 1971 and 1973 a plane was hit by lightning over the school. It crashed on the embankment near Grimston and apparently (according to the news at the time) narrowly missed the APT-E. It slid down the embankment on the Northern side and ended up on the test track. It must have been about 12 noon as I was just on my way home across the fields towards Nottingham Road for lunch. The pilot ejected and I was the first to get to him, he was all cut up on the head but could walk alright. The plane had passed over my parents house on Alvaston Road, I asked him about it and he said he'd pointed into some woods. (I guessed Dalby Woods). A couple of days later, my dad took me and a couple of brothers over to Dalby/Grimston and we went down the track. The wreckage had been cleared but I did pick up a piece of aluminium fuselage.”



## Street Signs



Ashton Close is just off Chestnut Way, opposite Warwick Lodge on Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray.



In this area, used to be Mowbray Lodge until it was demolished in the 1960s. Mowbray Lodge was built in the 1870s, to the same plan as Wicklow Lodge on Burton Road, and commanded an outstanding view over the Wreake Valley. Mr. John George Adair and his wife Cornelia lived there in 1878 until it was let to Captain Starkey in 1883. The following season, Mr. Brocklehurst was living there and Lord & Lady Edmond Talbot, Captain & Mrs Barry, the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough and Mr. & Mrs H T Barclay all hunted from there for several seasons.

For several hunting seasons, Lady Sarah Wilson and her husband, Captain (later Lt Col) Gordon Wilson until 1898 when it was purchased by the Vicar of Melton, Reverend Richard Blakeney M.A. and his wife. For more information about Lady Sarah Wilson, see my blog: [43 – Lady Sarah Wilson – HistoryFare](#).

Lady Sarah's brother, Lord Randolph Churchill used Mowbray Lodge as the 'rendezvous' for the 'Fourth Party', a small group from the Conservative Party who were campaigning against the Liberal Party, often against the wishes of the Conservative leaders. In addition to Lord Randolph, the others were: Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, Sir John Eldon Gorst and Mr (later Lord) Arthur James Balfour.

Reverend Richard Blakeney lived at Mowbray Lodge until 1924 when they left to live at Cathedral Close at Peterborough. Colonel Hugh Cecil Sam Ashton purchased the property and converted it into a first class hunting lodge with the addition of new stables and other modern improvements.



Hugh Cecil Sam Ashton was the son of Captain Sam Tudor Ashton of the 14<sup>th</sup> Hussars. Sam had Burton Hall/Burton Lazars Hall built for his family in 1881. He lived there until his death in 1900.

Hugh Cecil Sam Ashton was born 15<sup>th</sup> March 1879 in St George Hanover Square, London. He joined the Militia serving with the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own). He was promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 1900 and transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards whom he served in the Boer War with. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1900 and Captain on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1907.

Soon after the declaration of war, one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards squadrons was detached to help form the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment, which moved to France with 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division and saw action at Mons and in the subsequent withdrawal to and beyond the Marne, the decisive battle of the Marne, and later at Ypres. The

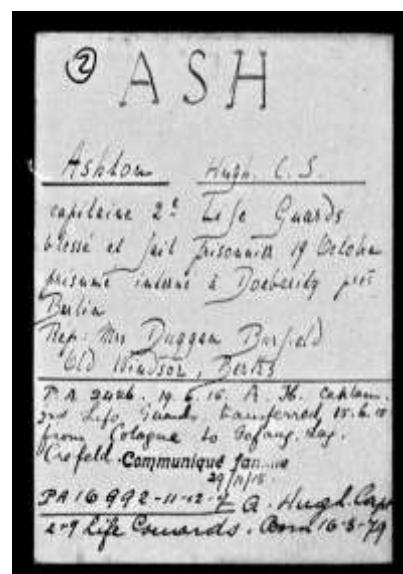
Composite Regiment was broken up on 11 November 1914, and the squadron rejoined the regiment, which was by now itself on the Western Front.

The main body crossed to Belgium, landing at Zeebrugge on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1914, under command of the 7th Cavalry Brigade of the 3rd Cavalry Division. Other than in the first two weeks when it was used in the traditional cavalry, for mobile reconnaissance, it fought most of the war as a dismounted force.

The regiment was heavily involved at the First Battle of Ypres (October – November 1914) where Hugh was captured and became a POW for the rest of the war.

In November 1918, after four years in captivity, Hugh returned to Melton after being exchanged for a German Officer POW in captivity in England.

In a statement to the Foreign Office, Hugh stated: *“On the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1914, I was captured by the Germans. As we were being marched back, a German soldier struck one of my men (Trooper Henry) on the arm with his rifle, severely hurting him. Next morning we were marched all-round the troops in the neighbourhood. Officers and men abused and derided us. We then marched to Ingelmunster Station, where we were partially stripped, and searched on the public platform. Our breeches were taken down to the knees, and our shirts pulled up, while we were compelled to hold our hands above our heads. Lieutenant Palmer (2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards) and I were put into a van with thirteen of our men and about a dozen Belgian civilian prisoners. For a long time we were kept locked up and not allowed to leave the van to relive nature. The state of the van was disgusting. Next day and for the rest of the journey the doors were opened at every station. The guard exhibited an old large bore cartridge with a lead bullet, which he alleged was an English ‘dum-dum’. This excited the crowd; large numbers of soldiers and civilians passed through the van reviling us.”*



On 12<sup>th</sup> January 1915, whilst in captivity, Hugh was promoted to Major, followed by Brevet on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1920 and Lieutenant Colonel on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1921.

High Ashton was tragically killed in a hunting accident on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1936 whilst out riding with the Belvoir Hunt near Bescaby Oaks in Croxton Park. His horse caught its foot in a deep rabbit hole and Hugh was thrown to the ground, breaking his neck. After his death, Mowbray Lodge was sold off and the next owner was Mrs Roxena Van Rensellaer, wife of the Third Secretary of the United States Embassy at Rome and formerly Miss Roxana Wentworth Bowen, Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Winthrop Bowen of New York. She owned Mowbray Lodge until she returned to the USA after World War Two, and the Franciscan Convent became the next owners until it was demolished in the 1960s making way for a housing estate.

Please feel free to share this bulletin with whoever you think may be interested.

**For any enquiries or to submit articles, please email Brian at [meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com](mailto:meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com)**