

BULLETIN ISSUE NO. 3 – AUGUST 2023



**Captain
Archibald Henry Brocklehurst
King's Royal Rifle Corps**

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 7th September 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**

Mark Baxter will be our guest speaker and the presentation will be about 63 Squadron. The story of just one Squadron from 1916 to 1992 and his personal connection to them. Note this is a change to our advertised talk on Holwell Range.



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 proving they are in date! Books and partwork etc will also be accepted.

Captain Archibald Henry Brocklehurst



The image on the front-page features Captain Archibald Henry Brocklehurst of the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

He was the second son of Alfred and Mrs Brocklehurst of The Spinney, Melton Mowbray and Langdale Lodge, Sutherland. He had an elder brother Peter Orme (b. 1886), an elder sister Peggy Emma Nora (b. 1888) and a younger sister Nancy Amy (b. 1894).



The Spinney, Thorpe Road

Alfred had The Spinneys mansion off Thorpe Road built in 1886 and it was named after the area in which it was built. He stayed at The Bell Hotel when he first came to Melton and also stayed at Mowbray Lodge for a while before having the property built.

A popular visitor to The Spinneys was Alfreds elder brother, John Fielden Brocklehurst, 1st Baron Ranksborough CB CVO who had a distinguished military career. He was commissioned into the Royal Horse Guards in 1874 and took part in the Battle of Kassasin in the Anglo-Egyptian Campaign in 1882. He also served in the Sudan campaign of 1884/85 and Commanded the 3rd Cavalry Brigade during The Boer War being present at the siege of Ladysmith. He was also Equerry to Queen Victoria and Queen Alexander and Lord in Waiting to King George.

John, or Honest John as he was known, retired from the Army in 1908 and became Lord Lieutenant of Rutland serving from 1906 – 1921.



Langham Church Memorial

In 1914 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Ranksborough, of Ranksborough in the County of Rutland.

The title derived from his seat of Ranksborough Hall at Langham, Rutland, which he constructed in 1893 and which was often visited by members of the Royal family.

He is commemorated on a plaque in Langham Church.

Alfreds son, Archibald, joined the local militia on the 11th May 1908 serving as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Bn The Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment). On the 26th July 1908, he joined the Special Reserve of Officers.

On the 4th June 1910, he was Gazetted as a 2nd Lieutenant, joining the King's Royal Rifle Corps as succession to Lieutenant R D Temple who had retired.

He was promoted to Lieutenant in June 1913 and went to France in August 1914 with the 1st Battalion KRRC and took part in the Retreat from Mons. He was wounded in the left arm on 28th September 1914 and invalided home.

Whilst at home on convalescence, he went out hunting which was his favourite sport. On 8th January 1915 he met with an unfortunate accident whilst hunting with the Belvoir from Eastwell. Almost at the outset of the day's sport hounds were running towards Goadby Hullamore in the wake of an outlier which had been roused near Piper Hole Gorse, when his horse put one of its feet into a rabbit hole and rolled on him. He sustained a broken collar bone and dislocated shoulder, besides receiving concussion, but made a rapid recovery, and was to rejoin his regiment.

Following his recovery, he went to France again and was again severely wounded in the left arm on 10th May 1915.

He was promoted to Captain (temp) on the 1st September 1915 and rejoined the 1st Battalion KRRC as Adjutant. His promotion to Captain was gazetted on 28th March 1916 and back dated to 2nd November 1915.

On 28th July 1916, he was severely wounded in the foot and body in the attack on Delville Wood with the 23rd Royal Fusiliers.

He died, the next day, 29th July 1916 of his wounds at No 2 Casualty Clearing Station, Corbie, France. Below is an extract from his probate.

BROCKLEHURST, Archibald Henry, Capt., 60th Rifles, of The Spinney, Melton Mowbray, County of Leicester, died 29 July 1916, at No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station, Corbie, France, testate. Certificate endorsed by Commissary Clerk of Edinburgh, 25 May, on Probate of the Will, granted at London, on 28 February 1917, to Peggy Emma Nora Brocklehurst, the sister, and Peter Orme Brocklehurst, the brother, the Executors. Value of Estate, £28,255, 19s. 7d.

Archibald was laid to rest in the Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension.

He was 3 times Mentioned in despatches for “Gallant and Distinguished Conduct in the Field” – in June 1915 and January 1916 by Sir John French and in January 1917 by Sir Douglas Haig.



St Mary's Boer War Memorial

On his death, his Commanding Officer wrote “I have lost my best friend and Adjutant, the bravest who ever lived, always cheerful, hardworking, and ready to face any danger. Had he lived I intended recommending him for a D.S.O., which he richly deserved on more than one occasion”.

Archibald is listed on the towns WW1 war memorials at Egerton Lodge Memorial Gardens, the Royal British Legion and also in St Mary's Church.

There is also an individual memorial plaque in St Mary's for Archibald.

According to the CWGC website, his home address is not listed as The Spinney, but The Red House.

Social Media

Keep up To Date by following HistoryFare on the following social media sites:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MeltonHistoryFare>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/farebrian/>

Twitter: HistoryFare @FareBrian

Website: <https://historyfare.co.uk/>

Email: meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com



Street Signs



Laycock Avenue lies just off Scalford Road as you head North out of Melton Mowbray and can be found on the right-hand side opposite the Cattle Market car park.

The next two roads after Laycock Avenue are a cul-de-sac, Northfield Close followed by Newport Avenue. Between Laycock Avenue and Northfield Close was Newport Lodge and Northfield Close now goes between the old Lodge and the Lodge Stables.

Newport Lodge gets its name from Viscount Newport who had the property build in the 1840s/50s.



Newport Lodge

The lodge was requisitioned for military use during WW2 and one of the first units to set up camp there was the 'Shropshire Gunners', or to give them their proper title, the 6th Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry which had been formed in Sherwood Forest in the summer of 1940. Due to a re-organisation/restructure, the 6th KSLI were told in January 1942 that they were going to convert from an infantry unit to an artillery unit and on 14th February 1942, they were re-badged as the 181st Field Regiment Royal Artillery. On 28th February 1942, the 6th KSLI ceased to exist, and 484 men were posted to form the new 181st Field Regiment Royal Artillery.

On the 3rd March 1942, the unit moved to Melton Mowbray and set up its Regimental HQ in Newport Lodge with Q Battery at Gaddesby Park Hall for training the gunners, R Battery at Baggrave Hall for training the drivers and S Battery at Ashby Folville Hall for training the specialists and signallers.

The unit only stayed a few months and in August 42, it moved North to Yorkshire for better access to the firing ranges for further training.

After their departure, it is not known what units next went into Newport Lodge during 1942/43, if any.

What we do know though, is that in early 1944, with the relocation of the 1st Airborne Division from North Africa and Italy, Melton Mowbray became home to elements of the Parachute regiment and Newport Lodge became home to 156 Battalion Parachute Regiment.



156 Bn occupied several buildings in town. They set up their HQ in Staveley Lodge on Nottingham Road and this was home to both the Battalion HQ and HQ Company, A Company & Support Company were billeted at The Spinney, the Brocklehurst family home, and B & C Companies were billeted at Newport Lodge.

During the 1950s, Newport Lodge was purchased by a relative of my wife, a distant cousin Robert Hart who was a builder with his father

Ernest Hart. Allegedly, the troops that were billeted there had left it in a terrible state, so he pulled it down and built many houses in the grounds and replaced it with a new structure which bears the name Newport Lodge. The stables from the original lodge have survived and have since been converted into residential accommodation.



Newport Lodge Stables

Robert salvaged several things from the Lodge and put them in his garden on Tennis Avenue. One item was a beautiful dog's tomb and the other was an arched stone window which is where, apparently, Edward Prince of Wales first saw Mrs. Simpson!



Brigadier-General Sir Joseph Frederick Laycock

Anyway, back to the street named Laycock Avenue.

Shortly after 1900, Sir Joseph Laycock of Wiseton Hall in Nottinghamshire purchased Newport lodge and made it their home.

Laycock served with the Nottinghamshire (Sherwood Rangers) Yeomanry in South Africa during the Second Boer War 1899-1900, for which he was appointed a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DS) in November 1900. He was promoted to major on 7 December 1901, and resigned his commission the following year on 6 December 1902.

Back in the United Kingdom, Laycock was the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire in 1906. He was the first colonel of the Nottinghamshire Royal Horse Artillery when it was formed in 1908, which he funded himself as part of the new Territorial Force.

During the First World War he served with his battery in the Middle East and also served with the Duke of Westminster's armoured car unit when it was involved in a widely reported incident where it rescued prisoners of war from Senussi tribesmen. Later he became the Commander Royal Artillery for the ANZAC Mounted Division. During the Second World War, he commanded the Nottinghamshire Home Guard.

Joe, as he was called, married Katherine Mary (Kitty) Hare in 1902 and they had 3 sons Michael, Robert, and Peter. The boys were known for getting up to tricks and on one occasion back at Wiseton, they made a raft with Michael tied to it and it floated off down the Chesterfield Canal! On another occasion at Melton, they fired a starting canon down the drive of Newport Lodge. However, when it fired, the wadding shot out and narrowly missed a lady walking past the gates on Scalford Road.

By the time of the Second World War, the Laycocks no longer owned Newport Lodge and it was purchased by Captain William (Bill) Hereward Charles Rollo and his wife Lady Kathleen Nina Hill.

Lady Kathleen was the daughter of Kitty, Joe Laycocks wife, from her first marriage to Arthur Hill, 6th Marquess of Downshire and so was the half-sister of Michael, Robert & Peter.

Captain W H C Rollo served during World War One in the Scots Greys and won the MC. In World War Two he served as a Flying Officer in the RAF Volunteer Reserve. Bill and Lady Kathleen had a

daughter in 1918 called Primula Susan, who served as a WAAF during WW2 and went on to marry the film star David Niven. They met when she fell on top of him in a slit trench during a German air raid on an airfield near Canterbury. They married 10 days later!

All 3 brothers went on to follow in their father's military footsteps by serving in the Army during WW2.



Michael Laycock

Michael, served in the Nottinghamshire Yeomanry (also known as the Sherwood Rangers). In 1942 he was in North Africa where his actions at Deir al Agram saw him awarded the Military Cross. It was the Regiment's first Military Cross of the war while in western Egypt.

On D-Day 6th June 1944, the Regiment landed on Gold Beach at 07.20hrs then advanced south as part of the encirclement of the city of Caen. With the loss of the previous commanding officer, (Colonel John Anderson had been wounded on D-Day), Michael took over command of the Regiment in a temporary role.

Arriving at Tilly on 11th June 1944, he was ordered to attack the nearby village of Cristot. It seems they were observed by a German Op nearby and they were then shelled from Cristot. Michael's tank nicknamed "Robin Hood", received a direct hit from a 105mm shell. Michael was killed along with Lieutenant Lawrence Head (Intelligence Officer) and Captain George Jones (Adjutant). Captain George Jones also hailed from Wiseton and was the son of the grounds man on the Laycock estate.

Robert, the middle of the 3 brothers, rose to the rank of Major-General and is probably best known for the creation of the British Commando Force during WW2. He was originally commissioned into the Royal Horse Guards.

When he first applied to join the Commandos, one of those influential in getting him the job was David Niven who married Primula, the daughter of his half-sister Kathleen. Although, apparently, at the time of his interview, he was not even aware that Niven knew his niece!



Robert Laycock

He commanded the Eastern Mediterranean Commando Force which was named "Layforce" after him and following his promotion to Brigadier, he commanded the Special Service brigade, responsible for training all the Commandos.



Peter Laycock

Peter also served in the Sherwood Rangers along with his brother Michael. Whilst in the Middle East, he became the Military Assistant for Oliver Lyttelton, the resident Minister of State for the Middle East.

When Lyttelton returned to the UK to replace Beaverbrook as Minister of Production, Peter also followed. Instead of rejoining the Sherwood Foresters, he took on the role of second-in-command for 10 Commando, subsequently took over Command of No 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando. Part of No 10(IA)

Commando included No 3 Troop, otherwise known as X Troop, comprised mostly of German and Austrian Jews. As these were officially 'enemy aliens' they adopted British names and false identities.

Walking Tours

Last Sunday, I hosted my first history tour of Melton Mowbray, taking 16 people around town, looking at various buildings and talking about some of the socialites and Royalty that are connected to our wonderful market town and its rich heritage.

I will be repeating this tour again on Saturday 9th September at 10:00Hrs if anyone would like to join me, then please send an email.

I am also hosting a Military History Tour on Tuesday 15th August, which is now fully booked. This will be repeated in the near future.

I am also currently working on a walking tour looking at key sites connected with the Paras. As you might expect, Newport Lodge will feature on this tour, so we will talk about Commandos as well, (although, you already no most of it from reading this bulletin)!

To keep up to date with future tour dates, keep an eye out on social media and my web page <https://historyfare.co.uk/historyfare-tours/>

Village Signs

Village signs are another example of history connections. Here are just two examples I have photographed recently.



The village of East Goscote lies about 9 miles from Melton along the A607 towards Leicester. It was built in the 1960s on the site of the former No 10 Royal ordnance Factory, known as the Queniborough Depot. As you can see from the village sign, they pay tribute to this by featuring an artillery canon on their sign.

The 2nd sign is Coddington in Nottinghamshire, and this portrays a Lancaster overflying the village which is a tribute to the aircraft that flew from the nearby RAF Winthorpe.

Till next time!

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